

Desert



DESERT QUIZ Here's a bit of geology and mineralogy, Indian life and legend, history and archeology, geography, plant and animal life. If you do not know the correct answers off-hand, you might do one of two things---start reviewing your Desert Magazines or make some lucky guesses. If you score 10 right answers you are as good as the average person interested in the Southwest. Quiz editor will rate you a "Desert Rat." If you answer 12 or more correctly, you belong to S.D.S., that exclusive fraternity which draws so many of its members from among Desert Magazine readers. Answers on page 24.

- 1--Meteors are found in---Volcanic areas only.....Anywhere on earth.....Just in the desert.....In temperate zone only.....
- 2--Laguna, one of the Rio Grande Indian pueblos in New Mexico, is located on---Rio Grande River.....Rio Puerco River.....San Jose River.....Pecos River.....
- 3--Monument to Hadji Ali (Hi Jolly), camel driver for Lt. Edward F. Beale, is located in which Arizona town---Ehrenberg.....Quartzsite.....Salome Tucson.....
- 4--When Roadrunners are first hatched they are---Soft and white with no feathers or down.....Semi-covered with speckled feathers.....Covered with white down.....Black and almost naked.....
- 5--Hualpai Indians live---In a deep Arizona Canyon.....On level plain near base of Shiprock, in New Mexico.....On land adjoining Papago Indian reservationOn plateau northwest of Flagstaff, Arizona.....
- 6--Chrysocolla is---Colorful variety of quartz crystal.....Silicate of copperIron oxide.....Sulphate of strontium.....
- 7--Montezuma's Castle is---Remains of a "bonanza king's" home in a Nevada ghost town.....Relic of northernmost point of Aztec civilization in the SouthwestA reminder of Coronado's expedition in 1540....."Apartment house" constructed by unknown Indians in Southwest.....
- 8--Papago Indians of southern Arizona are called "Bean People" because---Beans are principal commercial crop of the tribe.....It is translation of their Indian name.....Certain steps in their tribal dances require a jerking motion which white people jokingly compare with the Mexican jumping bean.....A species of bean is common native plant on their reservation.....
- 9--Jet is found in---Coal deposits.....Volcanic strata.....Saline lake beds..... Limestone country.....
- 10--Lee's Ferry, famed way-station for river explorers is located on---Shores of Lake Mead.....Colorado river.....Little Colorado river.....San Juan river.....
- 11--Lowest elevation in United States is foot of Bright Angel Trail in the depths of Grand Canyon. True.....False.....
- 12--Crystals found in geodes usually are of quartz. True.....False.....
- 13--Franciscan Father Garces was murdered by Indians at Yuma in 1781. True..... False.....
- 14--The roadrunner, or chaparral cock, is a member of the Cuckoo family. True.....False.....
- 15--Earliest Americans to come to the Southwest were seeking gold. True False.....

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“Mine, Miner, Minus” - The Story of Harqua Hala

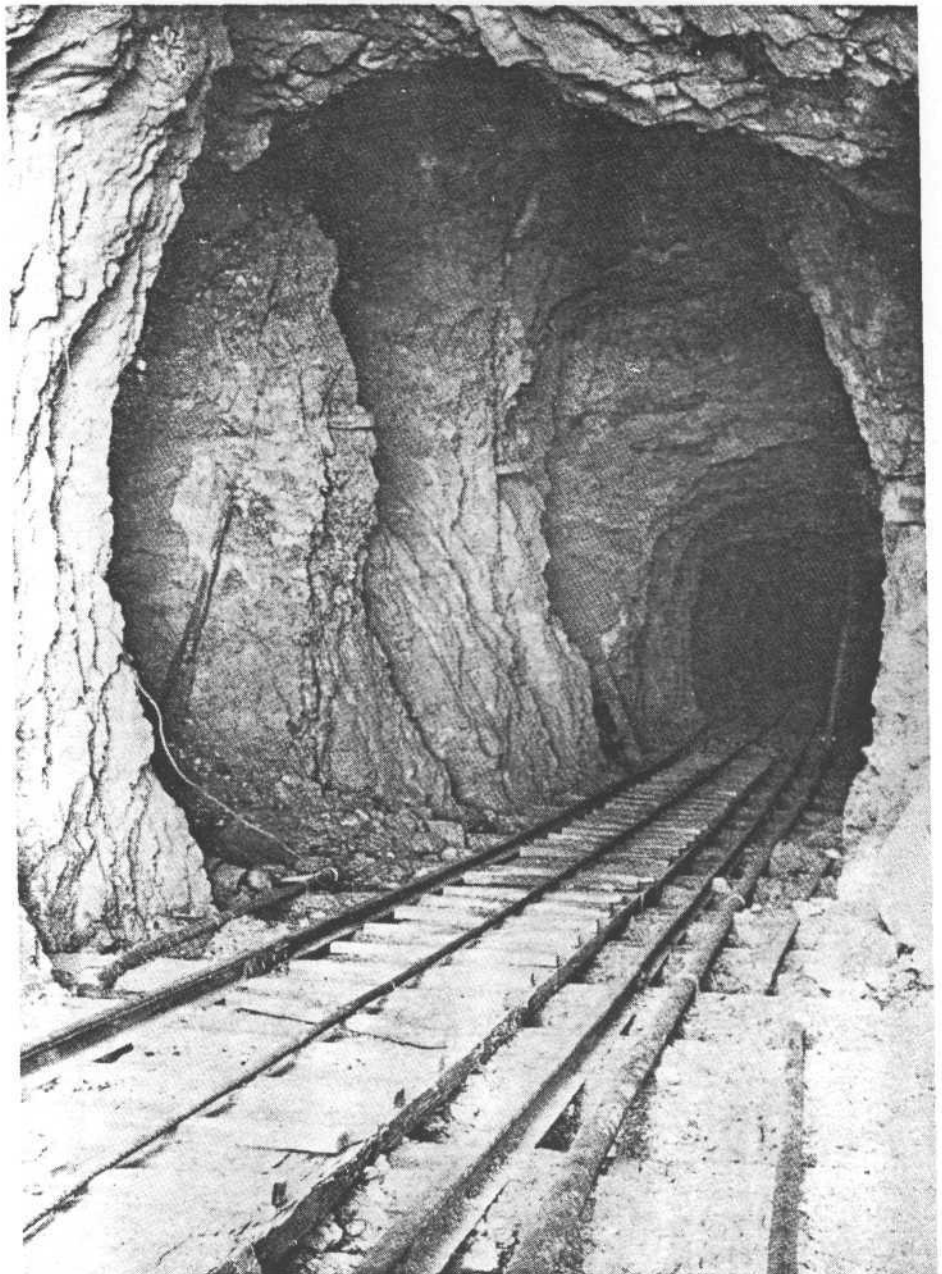
by D. W. Grantham

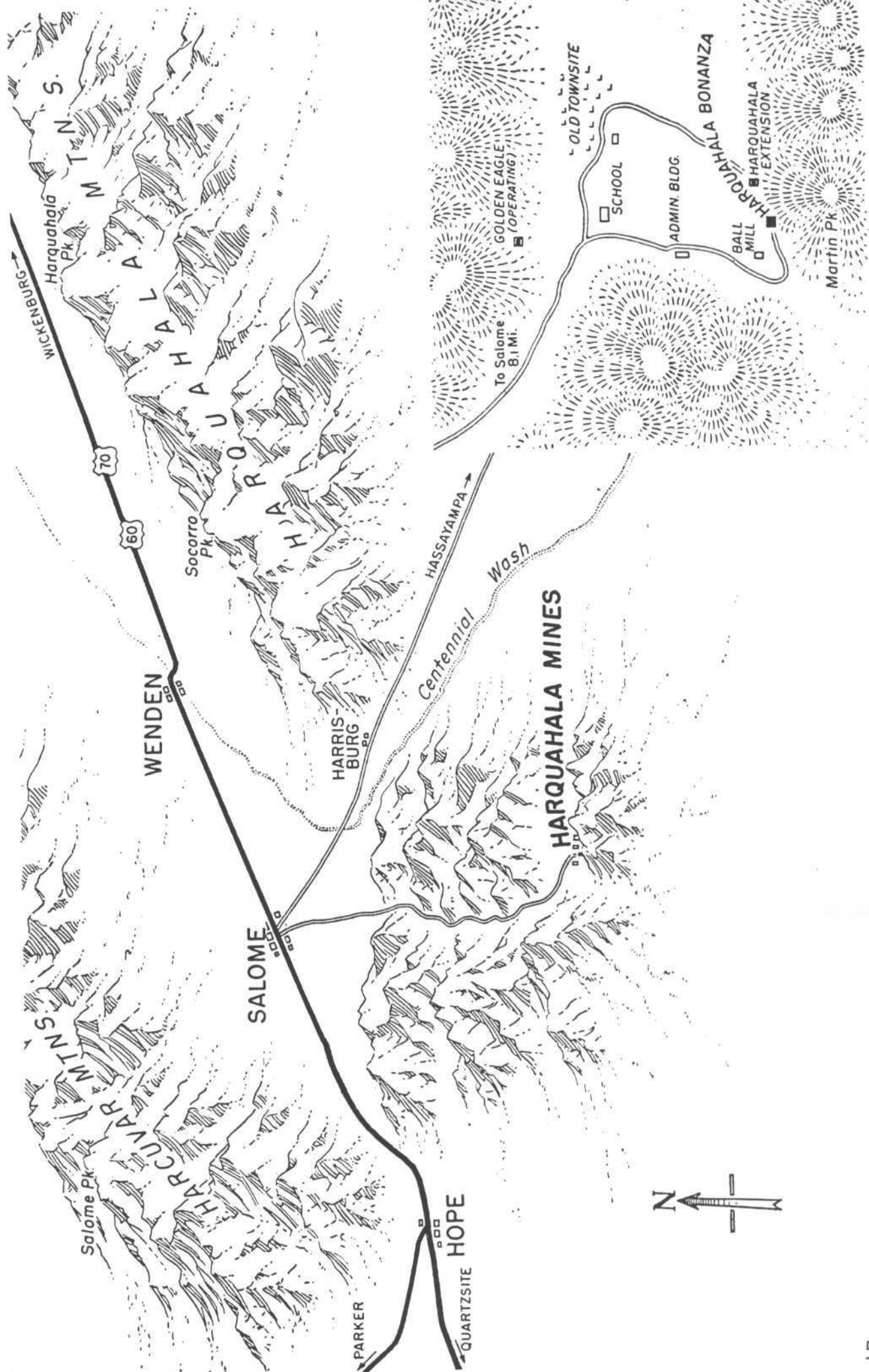
Where in Arizona can one find a gold mine that provided its owners with profits of over a million dollars each, sold for \$1,250,000, and was repurchased by one of the sellers for the princely sum of \$7,000? Where is the mining district that its English owners referred to as “Mine, Miner, Minus?”

To answer these questions, Desert travelled 56 miles east of the Colorado River to the town of Salome, Arizona along US Highway 60. Salome, which did not exist at the time referred to in the questions, is famous as the home of Dick Wick Hall and his Salome Sun. A good friend of Randall Henderson, founder of Desert Magazine, Dick Wick Hall published his little newspaper with enthusiasm that must have given the Yuma County Supervisors, one of his favorite target, many sleepless nights. The Sun also featured a 7 year old “stranded in Salome” frog who had not learned to swim. Through his newspaper, Dick Wick Hall became one of Arizona’s most beloved humorists.

As early as 1869, it was reported that a Pima Indian had made a big gold strike in the “Harquehila Mountains”. Sometime later, around 1886, Horace E. Harris moved a 5 stamp mill from Prescott to his claims near the town of Orville, by then renamed Centennial. Orville was a short lived placer mining settlement, located today about 5½ miles South and East of Salome along the Salome-Buckeye Road.

Thirty-degree inclined shaft of the Harquahala Extension.





He named his new town Harrisburg. The town received a Post Office in 1887 and was an active mining and trading center for a number of years. However, due to a nearby rich gold discovery and the establishment of Salome as a railroad shipping center, Harrisburg faded from the scene. The former site of this mining town is located east of the Socorro Mine whose ore was processed at the Harrisburg Mill. The Socorro is possibly the first gold mine extensively worked in the area.

To answer our initial questions, we must look to a trio of Miners, Mike Sullivan Robert Stein, and Harry Watton, and the events of November 14, 1888. The three were dry-washing in a gulch west of Harrisburg when Watton decided to take a break and climb a hill nearby. Spotting a piece of rock lying on top of a palo verde root, he kicked it out of his way. His foot must have hurt as the rock was heavy. Too heavy for such a small rock so he picked it up. It was a nugget containing gold worth \$2,000-- at 1888 prices of less than \$20.00 an ounce. There is no record of how long a break he took from his dry washing, but he and his partners picked up about \$25,000 worth of nuggets over the next three days. Then they found the Ledge and what was to be known as the Gold Mountain Claim or Harqua Hala Bonanza.

In a letter to a friend, Robert Stein wrote: "... the new strike has never been equalled in Arizona. The Gold Mountain Claim is an immense body of extremely rich ore. Boulders of float weighing from one to five tons assay out at \$50 to \$1000 per ton. We have picked up thousands of dollars in pure gold ranging from an ounce to over \$200 ... all this laid on the surface below the ledge and in digging we found the most wonderful rich ore hanging together with gold".

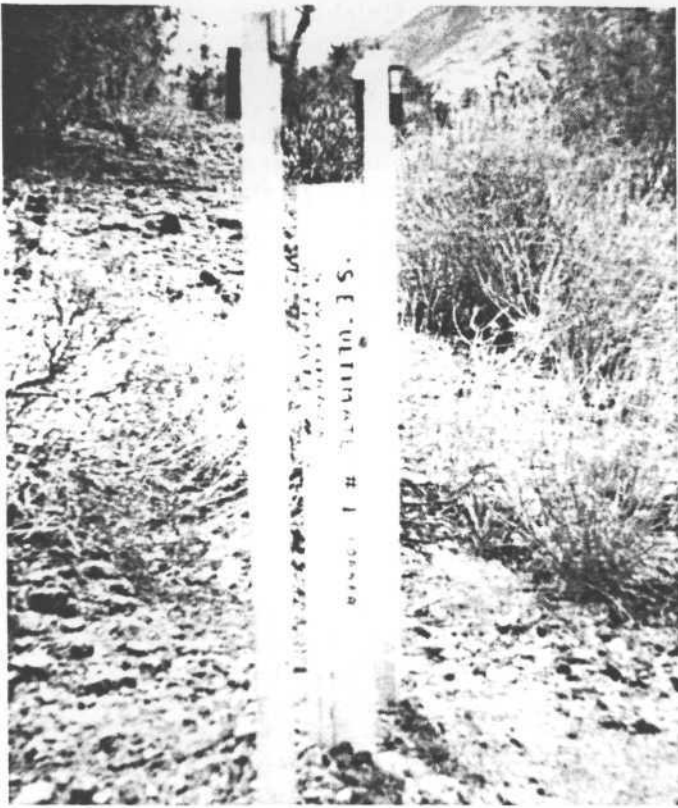
The rush was on. Harrisburg became a boom town. Even Wyatt Earp staked a claim near there.



US Highway 60 near Salome



Ruins of a Stone Building near Vicksburg



An example of boundry markers for a mineral claim near the Golden Eagle.



The area around Harqua Hala is covered with Saguaro and Ocotillo.



Salome of today is a quiet town along the Santa Fe Railroad tracks.

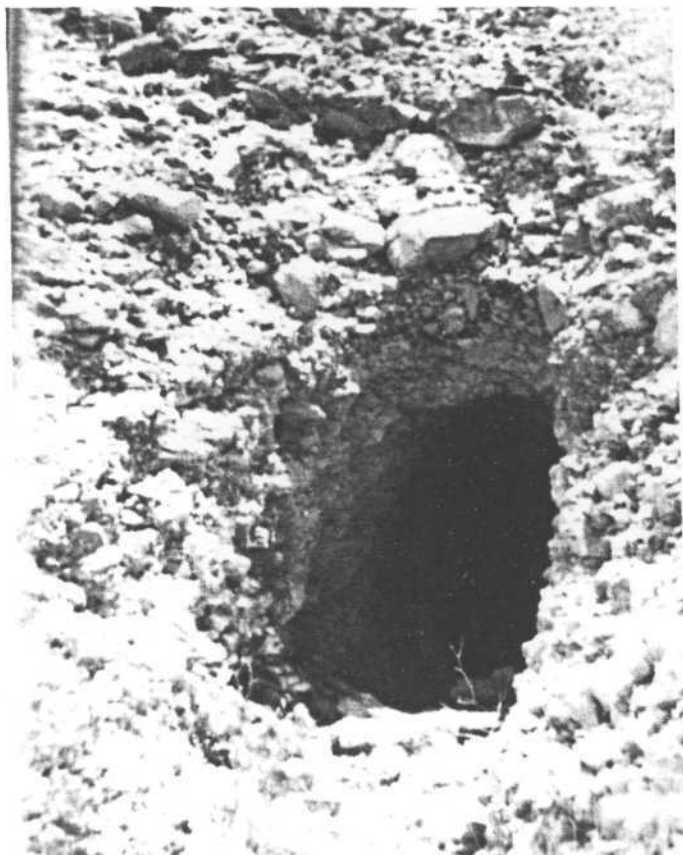


US Post Office building in Salome. Road to the Mines is just to the left.

The partners tried to sell the mine. Watton and Sullivan sold out for a reported \$35,000. Stein wanted more money. Later he sold his interest to a Hubbard and a Bowers, 2 men from California. These men then paid \$100,000 for the interest that Walton and Sullilvan had sold for \$35,000. Thus they gained a 100% ownership of the Bonanza and Golden Eagle claims.



There are a number of uncovered shafts like the above in the area.



This mine entrance is just to the north and east of the old townsite.

Quickly, they made plans to build their own mill. Until that time, the old 5 stamp mill at Harrisburg had been processing their ore. Not only was the mill inefficient, it was expensive.

A new 20 stamp mill was built near the mine and was capable of crushing 60 tons of ore per day. A waterline was brought in from Centennial Creek. A new mining camp, Harqua Hala, began to grow up around the mines.

The Bonanza mine proved to be very rich. In one 28 day run, a 309 pound bar of gold was produced. At today's price of \$342 per ounce, that would be worth \$1,260,720! Large bars of gold were the rule at Harqua Hala. To discourage theft, the gold was deliberately cast into very heavy bars prior to shipment, the assumption being that a robber would find it most difficult to carry away a 200 pound bar of gold on horseback. It worked because there never was a robbery or even an attempted one.

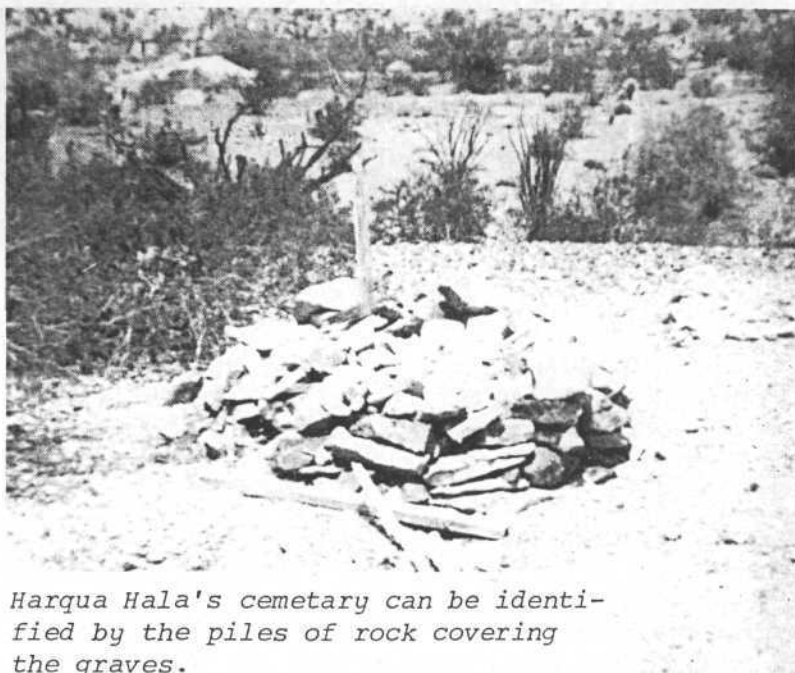
Other mines in the area produced some gold, but not in the quantities of the Bonanza. The Golden Eagle, the Golden King, and Yum Yum Mines were active, but production information is not available.

In June 1893, Hubbard and Bowers announced that they had sold their claims for \$1,250,000 cash to a Minnesota Corporation which turned out to be front for a group of English investors who called their company the Harqua Hala Gold Mining Company, Ltd. of Surrey, England. During their ownership of the mines, Hubbard and Bowers had produced around \$1,600,000 of gold with expenses of \$150,000 and capital investments of \$275,000, leaving a profit of \$1,175,000 to which we must add \$1,000,000 as their net proceeds from the sale of the claims, or over \$1 million to each partner. And they really did better than that. Unfortunately, George Bowers died shortly after the sale, but he left an estate valued at \$4,000,000.00, not bad for a prospector who, a few years before, was drypanning for a few dollars a day.

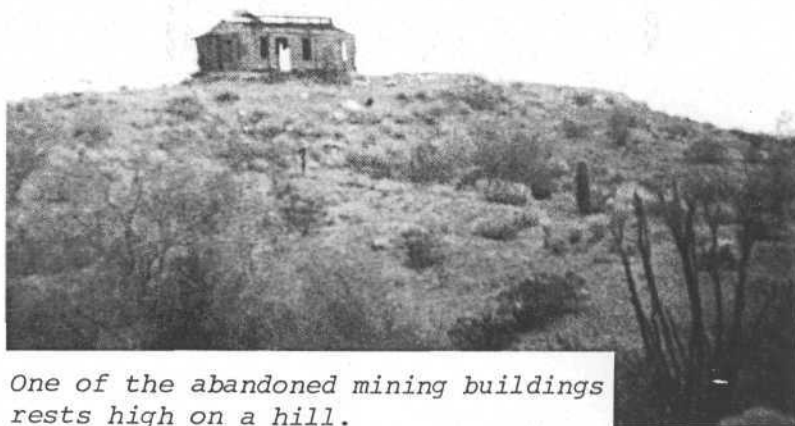
The English company had their own ideas about how to run an American mine. In short succession, they: 1) fired the Mexican miners and replaced them with higher paid Anglo Saxon miners, who frequently became sick and lost valuable time, 2) fired the experienced mine forman, Charley Pickenback, and replaced him with an Englishman named Oxman, 3) Lost most of the water pipeline due to a sudden large rain, thus necessitating expensive and time consuming repairs, 4) were forced to shut down the mill due to a boiler accident, 5) were forced to sink a new main shaft which caused a three month shutdown of the mine, 6) discovered that the rich upper level ores were playing out, 7) discovered that only low grade ore could be found on the lower levels of the mine, 8) discovered that the Golden Eagle Mine only contained low grade ore valued at from \$2 to \$12 a ton, and 9) had their tax assessment raised from \$40,000 to \$1,250,000 by the County Board of Equilization. Thus it became obvious that the English company was in trouble.

In desperation, they installed cyanide vats and processed the tailings. They even cut down the pillars in the stopes and processed the ore. This caused a great cave-in at Bonanza. The huge cavity created was named "The Harqua Hala Glory Hole." Then in October 1895, the company announced that the ore body was exhausted and operations would cease. It has been estimated that the English company lost at least a million dollars on their venture.

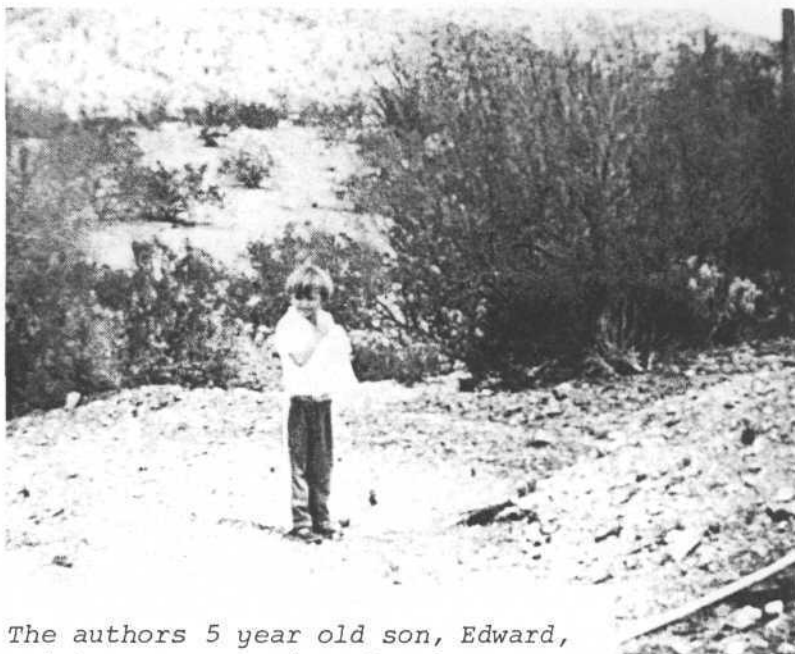
In the summer of 1899, the mine was sold at auction. The bidder--none other than Anthony G. Hubbard, who repurchased the mine for \$7,000. He held on to the mine and sold it for \$40,000 in May 1904. Since then, several smaller attempts have been made to mine the property, but without much success. But who really knows what secrets the Harqua Hala Mountains hold for the miner or treasure seeker.



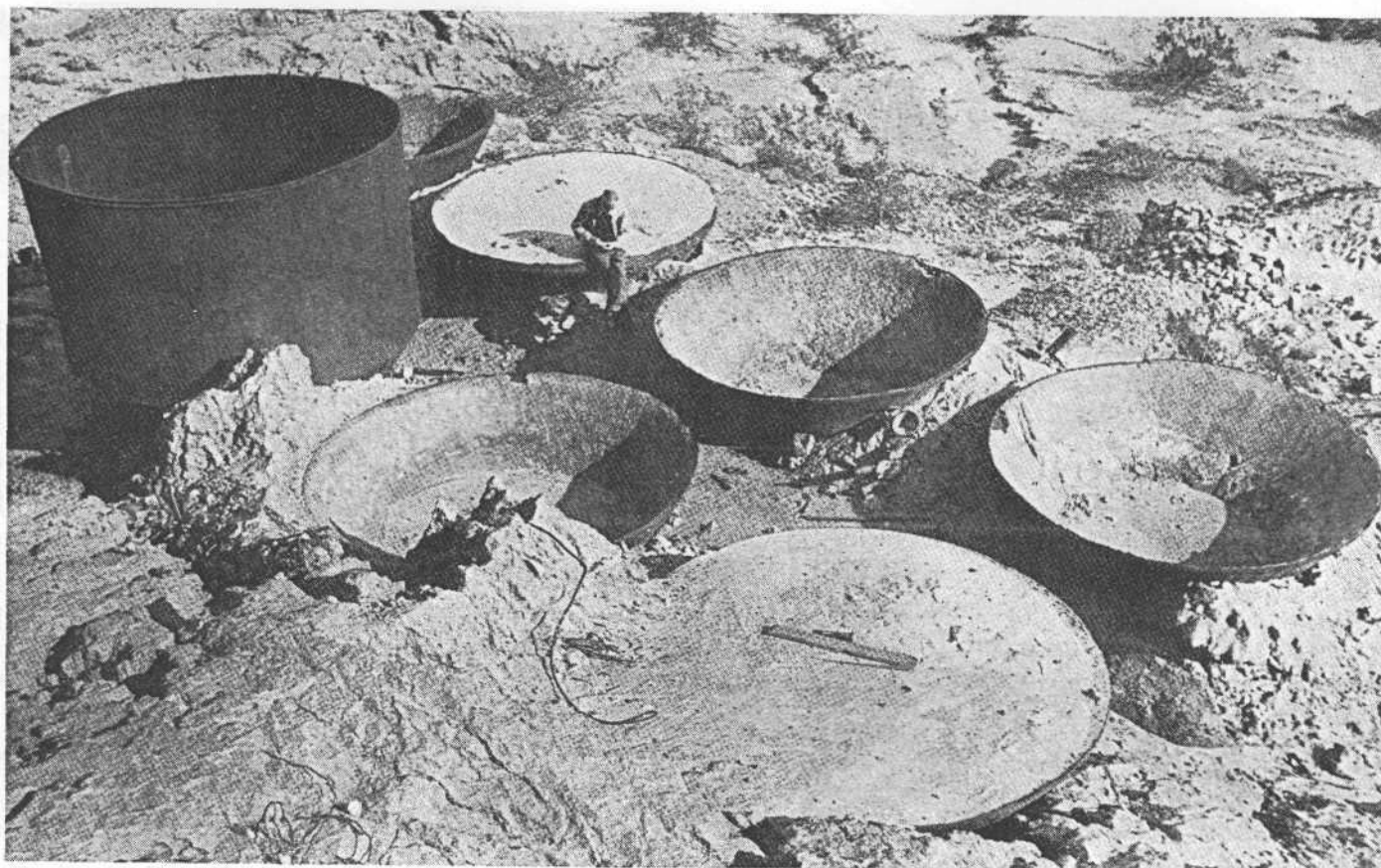
Harqua Hala's cemetery can be identified by the piles of rock covering the graves.



One of the abandoned mining buildings rests high on a hill.



The authors 5 year old son, Edward, points out an antique bottle.



Settling pans, like giant crucibles, lie below the clayey silt dump of what may have been a flotation-type mill, no longer existing.



Martin Mountain (right) and the famous Harquahala glory hole which resulted from the collapse of tunnels and stopes. Drifts honeycomb this once famous peak following fabulously rich veins of almost pure gold.

Today, a visit to the district is easy and can be done in a passenger car. To get there, travel to Salome, Arizona on Highway 60. Turn South on the road next to the Post Office. A short distance beyond the La Paz County Sheriff's station, the road forks. To the left is Salome-Buckeye Road. This road passes the sites of Orville, Centennial, and Harrisburg. To the right is Harquahala Road which we must follow to our destination.

The former townsite is approximately 8 miles from the junction, over a mostly gravel and rock road. The scenery is great with vast stands of Ocotillo and Saguaro.

At the townsite, only a few buildings remain, ghostly remainders of another era. A graveyard on the north end of the townsite next to the road, with its piles of rock, is a visible reminder of foregone times. The mines are posted as private property, so permission should be obtained before entering any posted area. Please be cautious as there are open shafts in the area and they are dangerous.

Rockhounds will find this area very rewarding. While the Harquahala Mountains consist of crystalline rocks, mostly pre-Cambrian but including some Paleozoic strata, it has been tilted in various directions and intruded by dark-colored basic dikes. Veinlets of quartz and calcite are found throughout the area. Ore shoots occupied zones of shearing between a sedimentary series of limestone, shale, and quartzite with the basal granitic formation. Pyrite was deposited along brecciated zones that are now filled with sericite. Some of the quartzite is conglomerate. Many very attractive samples of the colors of rocks of the area can be picked up around the dump sites. We also found a trash dump and were able to salvage some very attractive old bottles.

Harqua Hala, with its peaceful and scenic location, is worth a visit, if for nothing else than to enjoy the rocky desert and its beauty. It is an area we will look forward to visiting again.



The current facilities at Harqua Hala town site.



An overview of the Harqua Hala mining district looking west. Compare this to the picture on the previous page taken in 1940.

THE GOLDEN TREASURE OF PADRE LA RUE

BY DR. DAVID REDD

THE PADRE leaned closer to the lips of the dying man, so that he might hear the lowspoken words. "In the Sierra de los Organos, there is gold! I have seen it with my own eyes. It is no good for me to know of it, now. Padre...our people are starving...take them and go to the Organs. Surely they, too, will find the gold."

Gold! The padre was still young enough to feel an upward surge of desire and hope as he heard the words. The old soldier surely couldn't be wrong, for he had traveled over that whole wild northern part of New Spain. Then, too, the incredible wealth of the Aztecs was still remembered, for the year was only 1798. Padre La Rue looked out through the window to where his little flock were trying desperately to wrest a living from the drying fields of corn. Perhaps this was the answer to his prayers.

The man on the cot stirred and opened his tired eyes.

"This gold," the padre reminded him, "how can we find it? Where are these Organ Mountains?"

"You must travel ten days until you come to the place where the Rio Grande cuts its way through the mountains. They call it El Paso del Norte. Two days' journey farther north and you will see the stone pipes of the Organ Mountains. "Exhausted, he again wearily closed his eyes, rousing only with an effort. "At the north end there is a pass, and the Spirit Springs. Nearby you will find the Cueva Vegas, Cave of the Meadows, at the foot of a high cliff. The gold is there. Go, padre...go where the gold lies buried. You can save. . . our . . . people . . ."

With these words the old man died. The padre performed the last rites in a thoughtful mood. Go. . . where the gold lies buried. . . It seemed madness. Yet in a few months' time his people would be dying from the drought and poverty of this place. Where now were his early dreams? He remembered the day in France when he had been told that he was one of ten lucky young priests to be chosen for missionary work in the New World. He recalled the zealous thrill with which he had faced the long trip from France to this desolate little colony of hardy souls in Northern Chihuahua. He had led his people wisely, becoming more than a mere priest, more like a real father to his little family. And then the meager stream that had irrigated the fertile fields in the valley slowly dwindled, leaving the crops to dry and burn in the desert sun. Something had to be done soon.

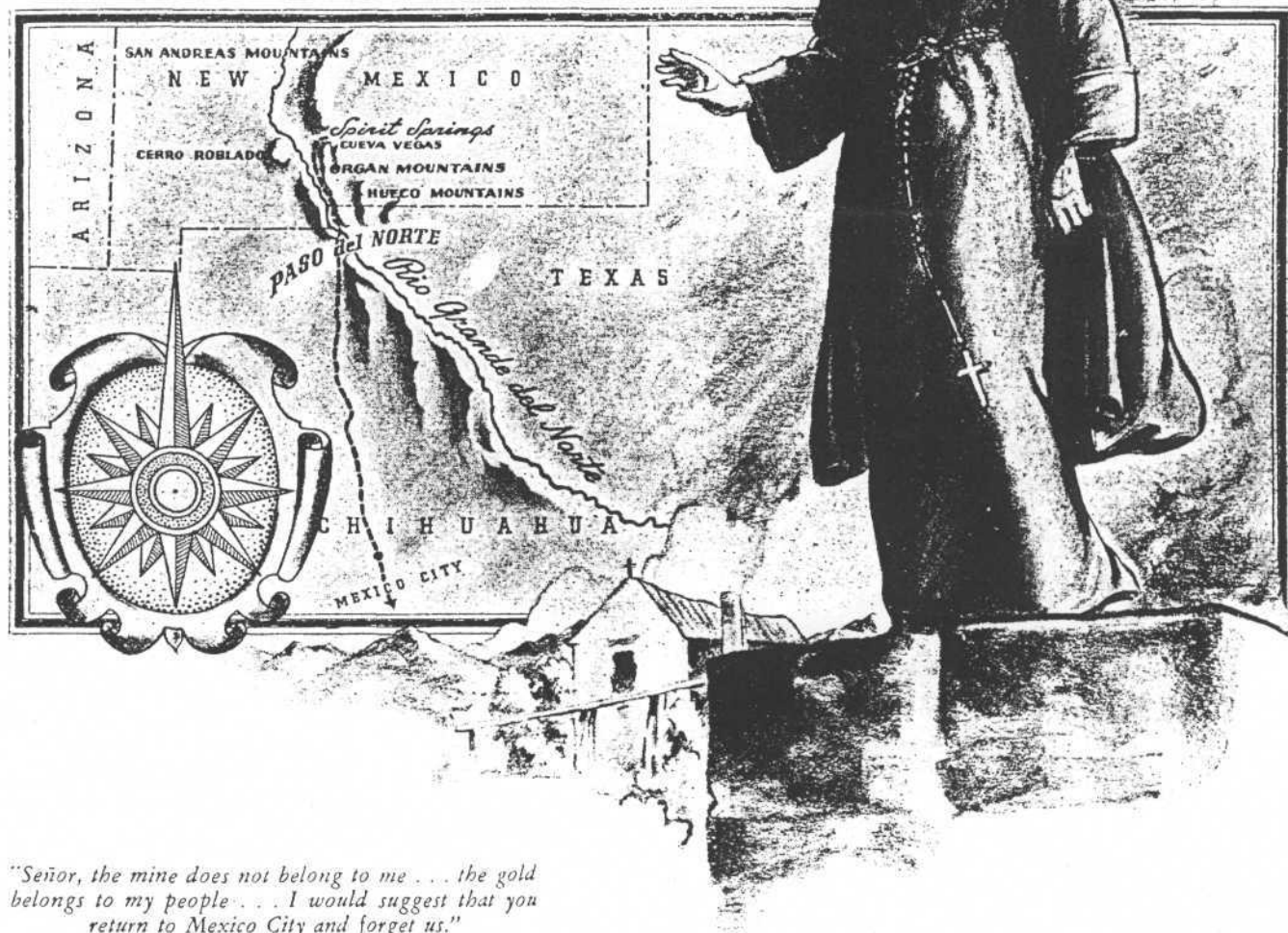
Resolutely Padre La Rue called his people together.

"There are but two things we can do. It is impossible for us to remain here until the drought is passed. Certainly we would all die of starvation. We either can go back to Mexico and find homes among our friends. . . or we can go to the Organ Mountains. Perhaps we shall find the gold of our good friend. Perhaps we shall find nothing. Which shall it be?"

There was among his people only one answer, "Gold."

It didn't take them long to prepare for the journey. Their mean little hovels held few possessions. One fine morning the caravan moved out of the village, leaving it quiet and deserted. And the Camino Real, that Royal Highway between Santa Fe and Mexico, was trod once more by a hopeful band toiling slowly northward.

To you who would "Go—Where the Gold Lies Buried" this map is not the key to your fortune. But it is as accurate as legend can make it. The story of the golden treasure of Padre La Rue and his 18th century colony in the Organ mountains is commonly known in southern New Mexico—but you will hear a different version at each street corner. For almost 250 years men have searched for the cave of gold bullion. There are today men who have spent most of their lives in a vain search. At least one man is certain he has definite clues that he is on the right trail.



"Señor, the mine does not belong to me . . . the gold belongs to my people . . . I would suggest that you return to Mexico City and forget us."

True to the old soldier's word, after 10 arduous days they came to a broad green valley with the towering Organ Mountains on its eastern horizon. Here was the abundant water of the Rio Grande, and the little Indian Village of Tortugas traded them precious food for the bits of finery which were remnants of better days.

After a brief rest and a laying---in of food, they left the lush valley and continued up to the pass at the north end of the Organs. Again they were thankful to find that the old soldier's directions were accurate.

There were the Spirit Springs gushing from the rocks, and there was the Cave of the Meadows. Now, where was the gold? Eagerly, the men scattered into the adjoining canyons, unmindful of danger from lurking Apache Indians. Soon they stumbled onto chunks of milk white quartz with evident gold content. They had found the right place!

"This is to be our home," Padre La Rue told them after he had performed mass. "We must make it as safe as possible against attack from without, and strife from within. Gold is a good thing when it is used wisely. I ask you to remember our proverty, and that we are here

by God's grace. To prevent trouble, I request that all gold be brought to me. I shall buy all supplies and equipment we need from the valley settlements and from El Paso. We must keep this gold a secret. If others learn of it, many shall aspire to possess it."

Months passed . . . and years. The rich vein of ore was found far back in the canyon where they could tunnel into it without detection from prying eyes. A high stone wall was erected about the village, and a constant guard was kept at the gate. Inside, the little houses of stone were beehives of activity and contentment. Arrastras, or ore crushers, were built and adobe smelters arose where once the mountain goat had held dominion. Steadily the gold bullion poured into Padre La Rue's treasure-house---the old Cave of the Meadows.

But, as he had once warned his people, gold usually brought trouble. . .

The first hint of disorder was caused by Padre La Rue's own neglect of clerical duty. When he first had come to his colony in Chihuahua, he had wanted to wait until his mission was well established before he reported to the Church in Mexico City. But the drought came and the climaxing knowledge of the gold. In the excitement of preparing for the journey, the question of his report to Mexico City was forgotten and when he did remember it, after reaching Spirit Springs, he deemed it unwise to let the Church know about their good fortune. The revelation of the gold would only bring an avalanche of greedy treasure-seekers down upon their quiet village. So the matter of his report gradually was forgotten by Padre La Rue.

But it wasn't forgotten in Mexico City. The Church was intensely interested in the progress of each of the promising young priests. Reports came in regularly from nine of the priests, but from the tenth one in Chihuahua... only silence!

One Senor Maximo Milliano was sent north as a representative of the Church to find a solution to the puzzle. After a journey of many days he arrived at the site of the colony to find only crumbling adobe walls and sand-drifted barren fields. Senor Milliano was deeply vexed. Finding his way to a nearby Indian Village, he faced the danger of bribing the natives to reveal their knowledge of the colony. He received for an answer, "They go . . ."

After reporting back to Mexico City, Maximo Milliano, with the aid of the Church, organized an expedition to search for the whereabouts of this colony which had so strangely disappeared. After searching for an entire year, they stumbled, by chance, onto the Indian village of Tortugas. Here the Indians told Milliano of the colony in the Organs--told him of the gold that had been traded for their food. At the sight of some of this very gold, Milliano's eyes widened in surprise. No wonder the Church had heard nothing from Padre La Rue! Quickly, he travelled to the colony.

Barred from entering the stone portals of Spirit Springs, Milliano demanded to see Padre La Rue.

A few minutes later, with sinking heart, the good padre appeared on top of the wall near the gate.

"Father La Rue, as representative of the Church, I demand that you immediately deliver possession of the mine and all gold bullion on hand to the church, to whom it belongs." The padre gazed steadfastly down into the greedy face below him.

"Senor, the mine does not belong to me. Consequently it cannot belong to the Church. God led a dying soldier to disclose its existence to us and God has helped us to develop it. It has been our only source of livelihood these years. Since the gold belongs to my people, I refuse to deliver over one small portion

to you or to the Church. I would suggest that you return to Mexico City and forget us."

In anger, Maximo Milliano left Spirit Springs to return again to Mexico. Padre La Rue knew that his little colony no longer would be safe here in the shadow of the Organs. Soon would come the throngs of gold seekers and the worldly. Corruption, greed, and growth would come and destroy his colony. He sank to his bed that night with a heavy heart. He knew trouble would come and he must now decide how to handle it.

But trouble came sooner than he had anticipated. The wild Apaches' hatred had been smouldering since the desecration of their holy springs by the white men. One dark night soon after Milliano's visit, when thunder was booming over the peaks and lightning threw weird shadows on the canyon walls, they swooped down upon the unsuspecting village, showered it with deadly arrows, tossed firebrands upon the thatched roofs, overcame the guards, and rushed into the treasure house. Brave to the last, Padre La Rue stood guard over the accumulated treasure of gold. But he was soon overcome and died in the room where he had guarded the gold for so, so many years.

After the padre fell, those of the colonists still alive fled to the shelter of the canyons and the peaks. Rain poured down in mad torrents and the Indians soon found themselves threatened by the water. The pursuers became the pursued. The Indians fled in all directions. Half-drowned people clung stubbornly to their rocky shelters and listened with fearful hearts to the tumbling waters that were flooding and dashing down the canyons.

As morning dawned, the storm ended. Wearily, hopelessly, a small group of sullen colonists collected where once

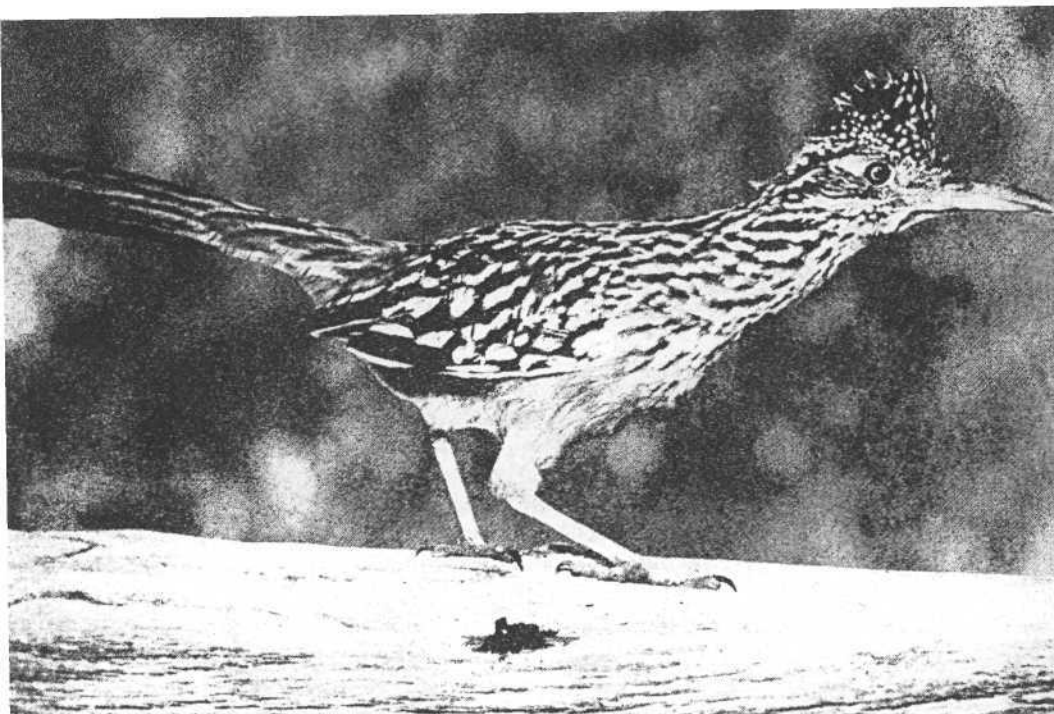
had been the village of Spirit Springs. The mine was gone, covered now by tons of rock and rubble. During the storm a mighty stream had flowed through the village, leaving only a few rock walls to show that man had once called it his home. Padre La Rue's cave was hidden, its entrance covered with rubble, rock, and stones that would take years to remove. It was as if God decided to handle the situation for the Padre and his decision was to obliterate the colony. The colonists found little satisfaction in that the storm had probably saved them from the attacking Indians. Filled with despair, the refugees made their way down the valley. There, they were welcomed among the Mexican people who had newly colonized along the banks of the Rio Grande. But the gold was not forgotten.....

Each generation since has had its treasure seekers. Today this land is no longer in Chihuahua, Mexico, but lies in Southern New Mexico. Like all legends, there must be a grain of truth in this story of Padre La Rue.

It is locally told that in 1907, a prospector visited the mountain home of one Teso Aguirre, a descendant of one of the original Spirit Springs Colony, and was shown the old cave and former site. But he was not shown the treasure, nor was it discussed. And the area did not show any signs of mining activity nor exploration. Again, Colonel A.J. Fountain of Las Cruces, New Mexico, claimed to have found an old record in either the Mesilla Mission or the Dona Ana Mission describing the richest mine in the Spanish Americas, located near the present town of Organ, New Mexico.

At a later date, a band of Spanish refugees on their way from Mexico to Spain stopped over in El Paso. They were reported to have found a church record in Mexico City, giving the exact location of the Spirit Springs mine. Could this have been Milliano's report of his discovery to his superiors??

Who really knows? But maybe someone, sometime will find the Padre's Golden Treasure.



Here he is—call him roadrunner, chaparral cock, snake-killer, churca, ground cuckoo, correcamino, lizard-bird, paisano—or what you will.

Roadrunners belong to the Family Cuculidae, which also includes the Cuckoos and Anis. The roadrunner really is a ground cuckoo. Some of the European species of cuckoos are notoriously parasitic, laying their eggs in the nests of other birds. The American species are not so inclined. The roadrunner should be protected, for although he at times does steal eggs and young birds, these forays seldom are of harmful proportions. As a unique member of our Southwestern bird life he should be given every consideration. Egg dates for California are from the middle of March into July.

Paisano, The Desert's Cuckoo Bird

by George Bradt

Have you ever seen a small, two-legged cloud of dust racing down a desert road? Or a large feathered lizard dashing through the desert thickets? If you have you've seen a roadrunner. If not—you've missed the most fascinating bird of them all.

You probably won't believe the first one you see. "There just ain't no such bird." He's half tail, half body, and all of him about two feet long. His unbirdlike wings are short and rounded, his pale blue legs long and thin. Almost directly behind a pinocchio-beak are brilliant yellow-brown eyes surrounded by areas of naked blue and orange skin. A dark, bristly crest adorns his head. Brown, black, olive, purple and whitish feathers, all of a coarse quality, clothe his slim body. He looks like a bird whose mother had been badly frightened by a large striped snake when he was but an egg.

The roadrunner's feeding and nesting habits are quite as outlandish as his personal appearance. Practically omnivorous, his diet consists of about everything from snakes and mice to tarantulas and bird's eggs. Occasionally it is varied with insects, fruits and seeds. But whatever the fare it usually is swallowed whole. This habit makes the ingestion of a snake or a lizard a lengthy and spectacular process. A sworn enemy of desert reptiles the roadrunner accounts for many a small but deadly rattler. But the story that he builds a cactus corral about the unlucky vipers, wherein they wear themselves out and fall easy prey to their captor, is a pure "yarn."

The roadrunner's strange meals are captured on foot, for seldom does this fantastic bird take to the air. He prefers to remain on the ground, to run about the desert on his skinny legs, and save his capable wings for instant flight in case of danger. He stalks his prey

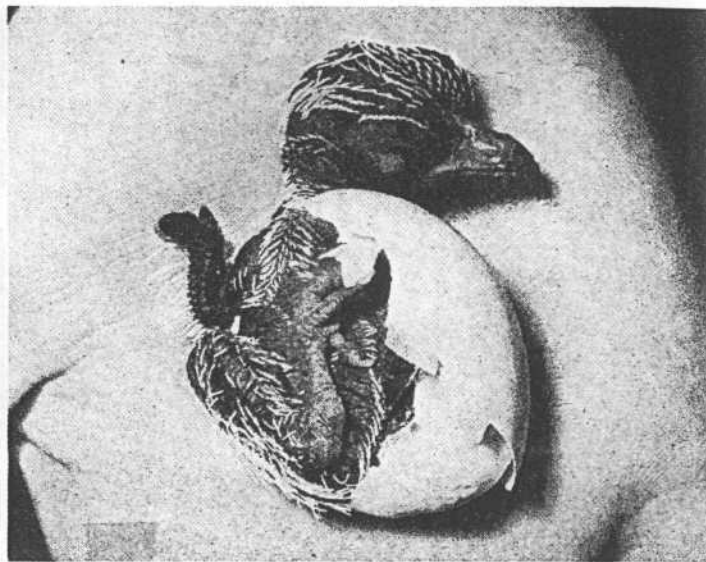
over the sandy cactus wastes as silently as a cat. Cautiously sneaking up to within a few yards of his proposed victim he suddenly makes a final, fatal sprint which usually ends with the quarry held firmly in his stout beak. A little efficient hammering on the hard ground renders the captive-unconscious, and the swallowing process is begun.

While a roadrunner's physical appearance and food tastes may be learned from a little quiet observation beneath a shady mesquite, a knowledge of the bird's nesting activities can be acquired only by considerable field work and much patience. This we learned after tramping many a sandy mile among the spiny yuccas.

During two desert nesting seasons we discovered the occupied nests of three pairs of these elusive creatures. Since roadrunners range from Kansas westward to northern California and south into central Mexico, our notes on their nesting habits apply fairly generally to the species wherever found.

Below left—Six large white eggs lay on the nest's thin lining of dry grasses. Right—It's hard work break-

ing out of a shell. Note tiny wings and large foot typical of terrestrial roadrunner.



The discovery date of our first nest was March 30. It was well hidden among the prickly leaves of a low yucca about four feet above the desert floor. The rough structure was made of small twigs, dead leaves and rootlets. Six large white eggs lay close together on a thin lining of dry grasses. Hurriedly we photographed the nest and left the area to let the adults return to incubate their precious roadrunners-to-be.

So far from home was the nest and so rough part of the road, it was not until April 15 that we had an yucca. So instead of the shiny white eggs the nest now contained a half dozen black-skinned baby birds. They were probably about a week old. Their pale blue-grey feet and legs were extremely weak, their eyes still were closed, their oily-looking black skin naked except for stiff white hairs and a few

blood quills in wings and tail. They were far from pretty babies but there was something appealing about them. Perhaps it was because they were so helpless and alone. The only protection they had from the enemies that roamed the desert day and night was their home's secret location.

Two days later we returned. Of the six babies only one remained! Here was a pathetic example of the struggle for survival on the desert.

Another two days passed and we again visited the baby roadrunner. As on all previous visits we failed to see an adult bird, however quietly we approached.

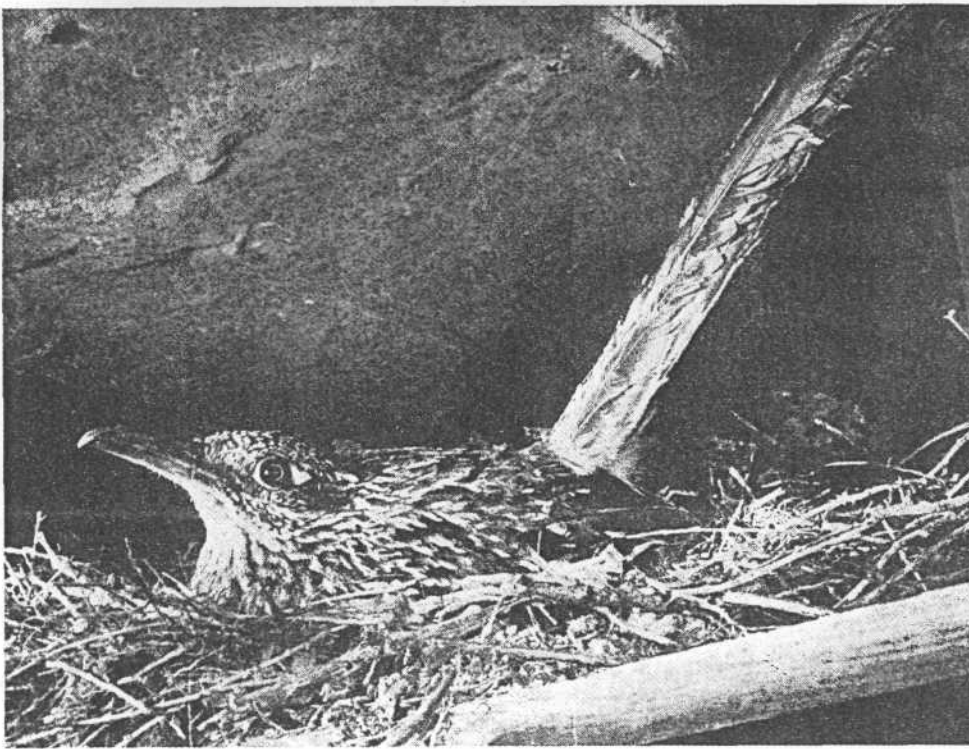
On the 26th, we found the little fellow already sprouting soft brown and white feathers on wings and tail. The moment he sighted us he tried to hide by flattening himself in the nest and "freezing." Not a feather or muscle moved.

Although we watched for five long minutes not once did he take his dark, unblinking eyes off ours. His color pattern was an admirable example of avian camouflage. Thanks to his mottled plumage he lost all semblance of shape. Had we not known of his existence I doubt if we could have seen him.

Our last trip to the nest was made four days later, one month after the discovery of the eggs. Our little friend was now well fledged and about ready to leave home. When he saw us approaching this last time he didn't bother to hide in the nest but nimbly hopped out

Below left—Where white shining eggs had been now black-skinned, white-haired baby roadrunners huddled together. Single survivor of a desert tragedy. Well-feathered birdling almost ready to leave nest.





Adult roadrunner incubating. Beneath warm feathers the baby roadrunner the author later photographed in the process of hatching lies well protected.



Roadrunner tracks in the sand; can you tell which way he was travelling?

and landed in a feathery heap on the sand. Apparently slightly skeptical of the efficacy of camouflage he had decided to trust to his long legs instead. The moment he hit the ground he scrambled to his feet and disappeared headlong into the mass of dead yucca leaves surrounding the base of the plant.

Before endeavoring to retrieve him we set up the camera. Then I began to pull him backwards out of his prickly hide-away by his thin legs. Although he didn't struggle much he did let out one harsh, rattly, rasping sound of such unexpected and startling nature that I almost threw him bodily from me in my eagerness to put as much desert as possible between me and that unearthly sound. I've handled some funny things in my desert wanderings but that was the first, and I hope last, time I ever had grabbed a noise covered with feathers. As he continued this racket until he had been redeposited in his nest we were able to find out that he made the uncanny sound by rubbing his hard mandibles together.

When we started to take his final picture we faced a problem. So well did his queer plumage blend with his surroundings it would have been a photographic impossibility to have shown just where roadrunner began and nest left off. The problem was partially solved by placing the bird on an old glove to give the proper separation between subject and back-ground. As soon as we had the picture we left nest and birdling for the last time. Although we returned a week later for a final check and to look for other nests we did not expect to find the nest occupied. It wasn't.

This final trip did net us another roadrunner nest however. Not more than three miles from the first we found this second one also in a low yucca. It was completely hidden from view by the plant's cruel leaves. We happened to find it only because we flushed an adult from the nest. Since the only way to reach it was from the ground directly below it was quite impossible to photograph it without first removing the greater part of the protecting foliage. We contented ourselves with a peek at the nest and its occupants. It contained one young bird almost fully fledged and ready to leave the nest, one tiny black baby, and one unhatched egg. We had read about the staggering laying of the roadrunners, but this was the first time we had seen an example of it.

The third nest of our study was discovered last spring. Late one afternoon in April, I received a message from my bird-conscious friends. In the form of a short note left for me, it read: "we've a hawk nest for you."

While hiking on a nearby mesa they had found the nest. As they approached it a dark bird had hopped to the ground nearby. Apparently in an effort to lure the visitors away it feigned mortal injury. But they were not to be fooled and went on to the nest which contained four white eggs.

Except for the mention of the bird's strange actions near the nest it did sound as if they really might have found a hawk's nest. But when I asked if the nest were in a yucca and received for an answer, "No, it's in an old shed near a windmill," I knew something was queer. A hawk's nest in a covered building was something I had to see for myself. To be certain of locating this eighth wonder of the bird world I obtained a detailed map of the area complete with intersections, cattle-guards, arroyos and other landmarks.

The nest had been discovered April 23. Six days later we drove to the old roadrunner area late in the afternoon and managed to decipher the map sufficiently to find the shed and windmill. At the base of the whirling mill was a large iron tank into which water was pumped for the cattle that frequented the country roundabout. The little shed, old and well-weathered by desert winds and sand, was covered with a rusted corrugated iron roof, and housed a small pump.

As we approached the shed we noticed two strange sets of tracks in the sand. Each print resembled a small letter "x". (See photograph accompanying this article). It was impossible to tell from looking at the impressions the direction their maker had been traveling. From his foot-prints you couldn't tell whether he was coming or going. They were the yoke-toed feet of an adult roadrunner. His four toes are paired--two point forward, two backward.

On reaching the shed we peered around one corner to try to find the nest without flushing the adult. It took some few minutes to accustom our eyes to the semi-darkness within, and a few more to locate the nest. Little more than a platform of course sticks wedged between a couple of old beams, it lay only a few inches below the sun-baked roof. On it sat a large dark bird--an adult roadrunner.

While the brooding bird had seen us long before we had discovered it, we approached to within six feet of the nest before it hopped off and disappeared through a hole in the back of the shed. The nest contained three eggs and one baby roadrunner. Since it was impossible to photograph the nest's occupants because of its inaccessible position we decided to concentrate on a picture of an adult bird at a later date. To get it we would need our remote control set-up plus a good many free daylight hours in the vicinity.

Sunday, May 2, found us again at the nest-shed. When we arrived we crept in quietly to get another look at the incubating parent. But neither adult was to be seen. In the nest now were two baby roadrunners, and two unhatched eggs. No wonder the adults were not on the nest. Hungry infants such as these had to be fed often and necessary lizards were to be found only far afield. For a few minutes we watched the little black creatures stretch their thin necks, open pink mouths, and cry unavailingly for food.

Just before we left to set up our camera equipment a faint ticking sound riveted our attention on the nest. A second later a thin black crack appeared in one of the remaining eggs. Fascinated, we watched the crack lengthen and widen until we were able to see the naked birdling within. At this point the little prisoner took time out--it's hard work breaking out of a shell, especially if you're no stronger than a baby roadrunner.

After a short siesta he fell to work again. Before he stopped a second time he succeeded in poking his blunt beak through the shell. Then appeared in rapid succession the rest of his blind, scantily-haired head, one shoulder, a tiny claw-like wing, thigh, leg, and bluish foot. This maneuver accounted for the better part of half an hour. The shell was hard and the protecting membranous lining tough. At this point I gently lifted the little fellow out of the nest and placed him on my hand. I shot his picture, replaced him, and left the shed to arrange for photographing a parent bird.

In the sketchy shade of an old mesquite we watched the underbrush about the windmill, shed and tank for signs of an adult roadrunner. Two hours passed before our vigil was rewarded with a distant view of an approaching "Paisano," as he is affectionately known in northern Mexico. Over the hot sands he raced, his head and tail held low in a straight line with the rest of his body. A few yards from the windmill he halted and carefully reconnoitered the little strip of no-man's-land between him and his shed. Compared with his reptilian appearance while running he now looked like a totally different bird. His head was held high and the coarse feathers of his crest stood on end like the plumes of an ancient helmet. Every second or two he flicked his long tail, while holding it at a rakish angle.

Satisfied that no enemy lurked in his path, he lowered head and tail and dashed for the shed. As the camera was focused to include only a brooding bird we were forced to wait until the feeding was completed before releasing the shutter. But as soon as the adult settled onto the nest we shot the picture.

This wound up our business with the roadrunner family. Knowing that by late afternoon the adults would have three babies to feed we left the area to give them a free hand. If they were going to capture enough food for their hungry offspring they would have little time for cameras.

You might say Thunder and Lightning are responsible for it—that is, the curiosity of travelers in the Mojave desert when they come upon the stilt-like ruins of a road bed east of Trona where an "elevated" has no right to be. But when Thunder and Lightning, Prospector Joe's two burros, discovered the healing qualities of the white dust near their campsite they inadvertently started the Epsom salts mining industry over beyond Wingate pass, with the consequent building of the elevated mono rail which served to haul the salts out of the desert mountains. Now only the skeleton of the road bed remains, to evoke questions from those who pass along that way.

THE MOJAVE MONORAIL

By

C.L. Keagle



Like a great thousand legged worm the mono rail road crawls up through Layton canyon. View of construction work taken by unknown photographer.

The hot September sun hung low over the jagged peaks and canyons of the Slate range to the west. It cast a coppery pink glow over the dusty desert spaces of Panamint valley. Joe Ward, prospector, poet and singer of desert songs, was migrating from the north to spend the winter in Death Valley. The sparrows might wait for the frost to yellow the leaves before starting south but Thunder and Lightning, Joe's two frisky young burros, had no wings and Joe had to allow for their step-by-step progress. The lure of the desert and the search for its precious minerals led him over the vast spaces of California, Nevada and Arizona but the Mojave desert claimed most of his time.

His desert songs and salty rimes were favorite quotations among fellow prospectors and miners. He left bits of poetry or caustic com-

ment along the trail for over 50 years. His letters were addressed in rimes that were sometimes embarrassing to the recipient. His claim stakes bore such rimes as:

"Move on, my friend,
This claim is mine,
I drove this stake
In 1909."

His filing notices in the recorder's office at San Bernardino bear these comments and many more:

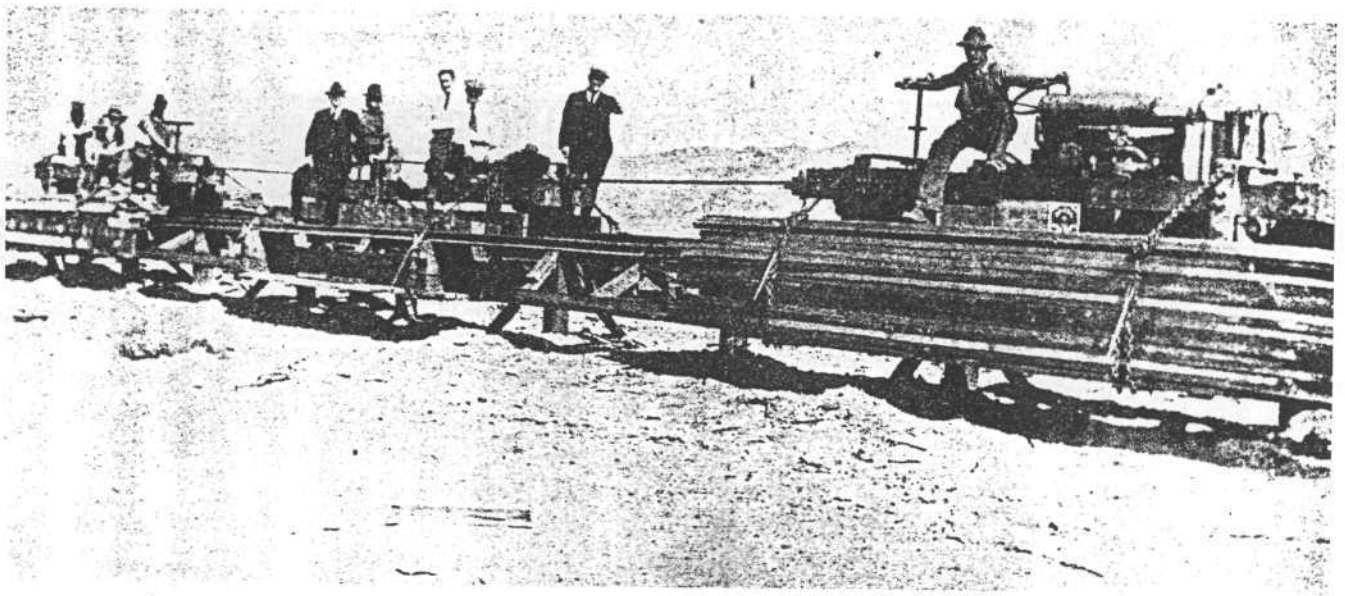
"Witness: God or nobody, unless the other fellow was there in the volcano.

"Witness: Two fools and another one, myself, a crook. Also Jan Smuts of Joburg and other nutts and a few sick Communists, also from Joburg, S.A.

"Witness: None. It was too cold out. Coldest day I ever saw and vind enough to run all the real state mills in Los Angeles."

Another of his filing notices described the locator as: "Joseph Ward, Explorer. Partner to Columbus

As the trio plodded on and approached Wingate pass, Thunder and Lightning pricked up their lusty ears. They evidently remembered a favorite camping place near a little spring. They had been without water all day and it still was not on the Mojave desert in the Mojave desert in September. Just over the pass Joe led the way south to the old campsite. The spring was a mere poze at this season but Joe, experienced in camp lore, used a rusty tin can for a shovel and soon had a little reservoir into which the water trickled. The burros drank thirstily.



Cars and locomotive operating on the mono rail carrying timber for the extension of the elevated road bed. Thos. H. Wright, founder and president of American Magnesium company, is fifth from left, in black suit.

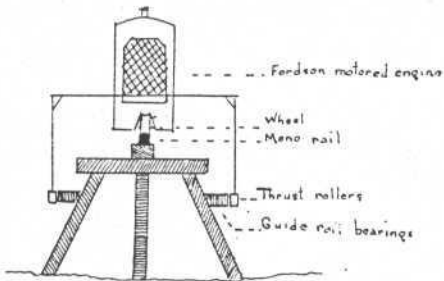
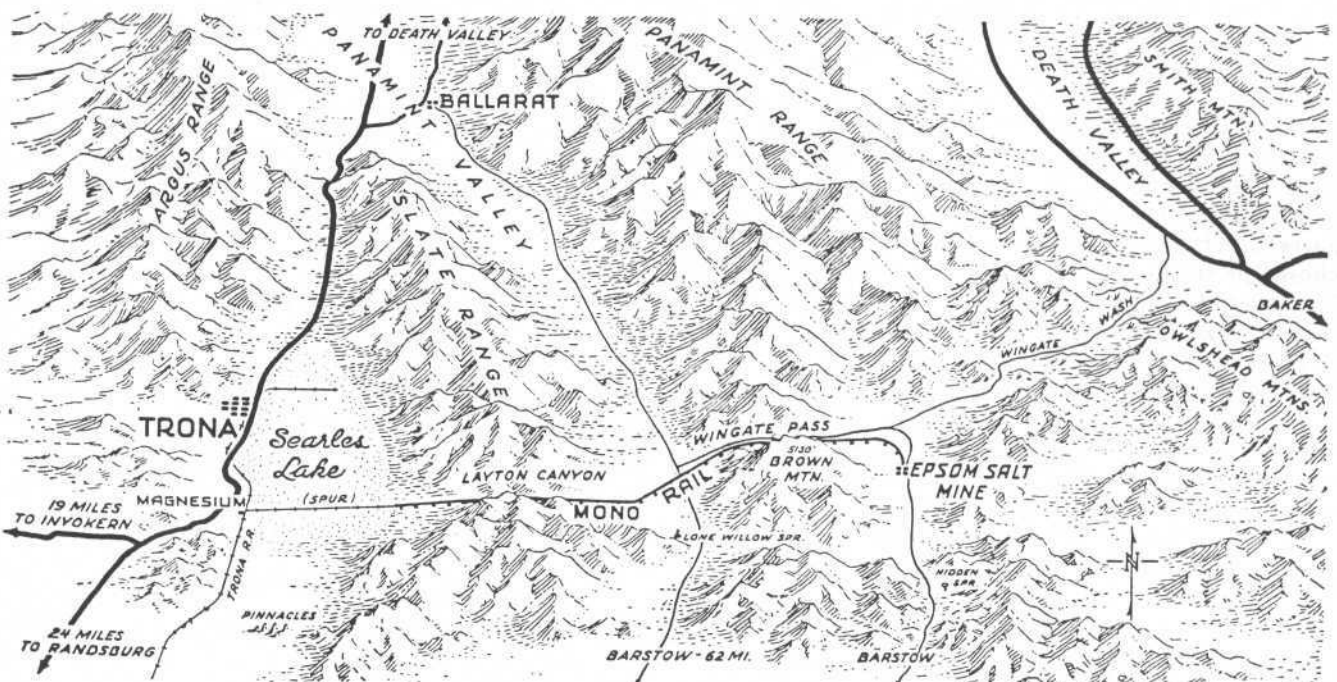


Diagram of Mono Rail and Engine

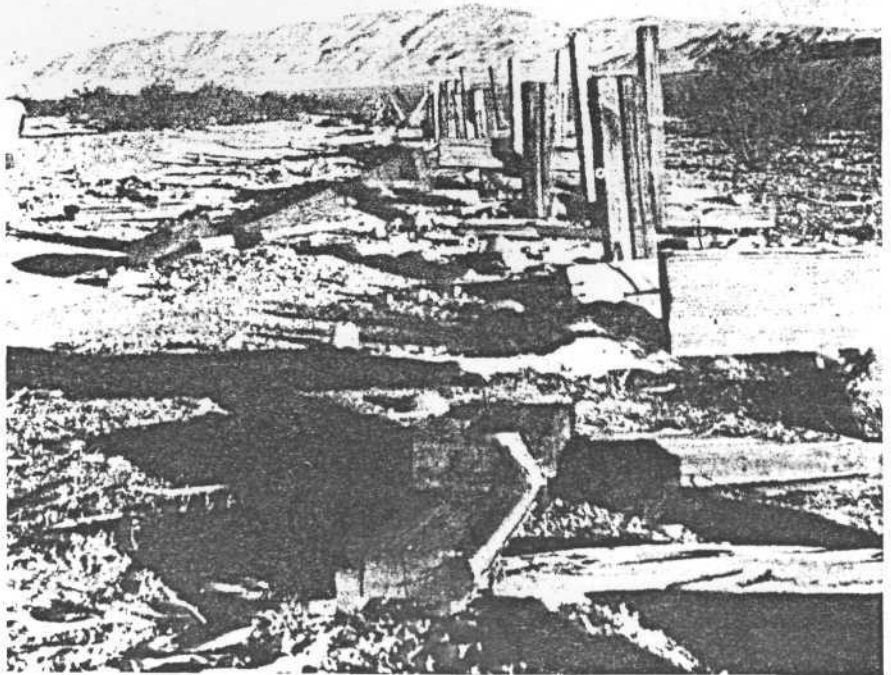
Joe pulled the pack saddles off their backs and left them to their own devices while he gathered greasewood for his campfire and put the coffee on to boil.

As soon as the packs were off, Thunder and Lightning ambled over to a whitish deposit on the hill slope and rolled in the chalky dust to sooth their sweaty backs. After rolling, grunting and kicking to their hearts' content they struggled to their feet and wandered back to the campfire, looking in the twilight like two burro ghosts. They were white all over except where their dark eyes peered out from under fluffy white pompadours.

Joe remembered that on previous treks the burros had gone to the same spot to roll, so with a prospector's curiosity he walked over and took a sample of the white dust which he sent to an assayer in Los Angeles. It proved to be magnesium sulphate or, in plain words, Epsom salts. The burros hadn't heard of the healing properties of the spas at Epsom, England; but they knew the white dust healed--and cooled their sore backs. Joe told other prospectors that the white patch was nothing but plain Epsom salts, then with his burros passed on down the steep eastern slope of the pass.



Remains of mono rail road bed east of Searles lake, showing type of earth surface over which it was constructed.



Years passed by. Other prospectors visited the "Epsom-salts mine" but nothing was done with it. There were no roads and no means of transportation. A United States government document, "Water Supply Paper No. 578," written on the Mojave desert region, contains this statement about Wingate pass: "When the writer was in the valley (Wingate Valley) October, 1917, and January, 1918, it was uninhabited except for a temporary camp of miners exploring deposits of Epsom salts on the south side."

Thomas H. Wright, a Los Angeles florist whose hobby was prospecting during his vacations, was exploring near Wingate pass, so the story goes, when he ran out of water for his mule. He turned the mule loose to find water and followed him to Hidden springs, southwest of the pass. On the return trip with the mule he noticed this white deposit and turned off the trail to take sample. When he had them assayed upon his return to Los Angeles, they proved to be magnesium sulphate. He filed a claim on the deposit.

Wright took some business associates into his confidence. There were more trips to the desert. If the transportation problem could be managed it looked as if this great deposit could be manufactured profitably into bath salts. Conferences were held and plans laid. They formed the American Magnesium Company. It included engineers, chemists, mineralogists, bankers and lawyers. Wright, the promoter, was chosen president. R.V. Leeson was a consulting engineer, Capt. Hollenbeck was given the construction contract. L. Des Granges was a construction engineer on the job.

Stock was sold and plans made for the development of the property.

Some mode of transportation was the first necessity. A railroad would have to be built from the Trona railroad out through Layton Canyon in the Slate range, east across Wingate Valley, through Wingate Pass in the Panamint Mountains to the deposit south of the pass, a total distance of 29 miles.

After many meeting and discussions with their engineers, the corporation decided, because of the steep grades encountered in the Slate range, to experiment with a monorail type of railroad. The president and some of the directors were much interested in the monorail experiment. They visualized it as a means of interurban transportation around Los Angeles and as applicable to difficult hauling jobs.

Wright applied for a patent on the monorail equipment which he and the engineer, R.V. Leeson, had designed. A patent was issued June 23, 1923. The corporation decided to ask the American Trona Corporation to build a spur from its railroad across the difficult Searles Lake bed to connect with the monorail on its eastern shore. The American Trona Corporation, after consulting with their maintenance engineer, M.C. Cockshott, agreed to build a spur from Magnesium east across the lake bed.

Construction must have begun as soon as the patent was issued, for Engineering News, September 27, 1923, has this item: "A magnesium sulphate deposit, owned by the American Magnesium Company and located near the Death Valley Desert in Southern California, is to be tapped by a monorail railroad twenty - eight miles long, extending over the Slate Range to the Panamint Range. Of this line about sixteen miles has been completed and is carrying construction trains which are delivering materials for continuing the road.

"Although detailed costs are not available, the type of construction selected, which was chosen because of the fact that it would require very little grading and would permit sharp curves, is estimated to cost about \$7,000 per mile in rough, mountainous country and about \$5,000 in the desert with no rock work or sharp curves involved.

"The construction consists of standard 6"x8" ties, 8 ft. long, placed on 8 ft. centers and braced on either side. The plumb posts carry a 6"x8" stringer, which in turn supports the single 50 lb. steel rail. There are also two side rails of timber, carried by the braces, which act as guide rails, their vertical faces making contact with rollers on either side.

"The engine and cars are designed like pack saddles and are suspended on two wheels from the single rail, motorcycle fashion. Equilibrium is maintained by the rollers on either side which contact with the timber guide rails."

The first propelling power which was used during part of the construction period, was a battery driven motor. This failed to deliver enough power and was replaced by a Fordson motored locomotive built on the same general plan. At first the power was transmitted by rigid rods but these were twisted on the sharp curves and were soon replaced by chain drives on both front and rear wheels. This Fordson engine was used during the latter part of the construction and for sometime afterward but many locomotive difficulties were encountered.

The braking system was another headache on the steep grades. An engineer in a recent letter about the monorail says, "I had one ride on the monorail as far as Wingate Pass and was rather relieved to get back with a safe skin, keeping a watchful eye on the braking arrangements all the time."

As the elevated road bed crept out across the desert from the east side of Searles Lake bed, timbers cut to the proper lengths to conform to the contour of the land were carried on the cars and lashed to the side of the engine. There were 10 percent grades and 40-percent curves so only five tons of timber could be carried at a time. A cottage for the superintendent and a laboratory were built at the mine site and the corporation began operations.

In the spring of 1924 Joe Ward, followed by Thunder and Lightning, now sedate old burros, climbed the western slope of Death Valley. The old prospector had wandered over Arizona and Nevada then spent the winter in the valley. As he looked back on the

valley it never had seemed more beautiful, with desert sunflowers carpeting great patches and the sand reflecting the blue of the sky. But there was a threat of summer heat in the air and it was time to migrate north.

As they followed the trail around the brow of the hill Joe paused in amazement. It was his first glimpse of the monorail writhing through the pass like a monster thousand-legged worm. At the old campsite were buildings and a bustle of activity. Around the campfire that night Joe told how Thunder and Lightning first discovered the Epsom salts.

Early the next morning when Joe had loaded the burros and started on his way, one of the workers picked up an old envelope on the trail addressed:

*"This letter goes to
Harvey West,
A miner with gravy
on his vest,
He's living now,
to escape the law,
At Little Rock,
in Arkansas."*

The American Magnesium Company had hoped to haul long strings of cars in order to work a refinery at full capacity. But the motors developed only enough power to pull three loaded cars. This difficulty led to a contract with A.W. Harrison, of Los Angeles, an automotive engineer, who planned a gas-electric train, consisting of an engine and a generator to supply driving power for both the engine and the cars.

By the time the gas-electric train, a heavy affair, was completed the desert heat had splintered the timbers and loosened the bolts of the elevated road bed. The wheels on the wooden guide rails had worn them to shreds. The structure would not carry the weight of the newly-assembled train. And the old locomotive would not furnish enough power to haul paying loads.

Down at the Wilmington plant they found that the deposit was nearly 50 percent sand, debris and other salts, not then desired. As the product was refined and made into bath salts the debris piled up around the plant. The city authorities stepped in and objected to the accumulation of waste inside the city limits.

There were legal troubles as well. The mineral claims in the Panamints had been extended to cover 1440 acres. These claims were a source of disputes, suits and counter suits. Slick promoters had obtained control of much of the stock. Although more than a million dollars had been invested, it became evident that the mine could not be operated at a profit. The promoters and directors who had heavily invested themselves, made every effort to salvage something for the stockholders. But there were too many factors against them. Operations were suspended early in 1928. The property was offered for bids April 28, 1928. There were no buyers. Mr. Wright turned his interests over to the company.

The monorail line was abandoned and the timbers began to feed the campfires of prospectors. Junk men carried off the steel rails and part of the stretch through Layton Canyon was carried away by a cloudburst. The buildings at the mine became headquarters for the hunters of wild burros who shot the burros, dried the carcasses and shipped them to fox farms all over the country. These burros were the descendants of animals turned loose when prospectors adopted automobiles as a quicker means of transportation. This practice was soon outlawed.

A few of the directors kept the taxes paid in the hope that the government might become interested in the magnesium sulphate and in some deposits of aluminum sulphate from which alum is made. San Bernardino County records show that the taxes were reduced from \$3000 annually to \$28 in the early 1930's.

In Layton Canyon few of the upright timbers, which once supported the monorail, still are standing. Bolts and nuts scattered along the route are gathered as souvenirs by trophy hunters. If Joe Ward and Thunder and Lightning could come back to their old campsite now they could camp for weeks without being disturbed. Thus the first monorail to be built in California quietly passed from the scene. It was Technology that defeated the monorail--the use of wood that cannot withstand the desert extremes along with an engine that was not tested before construction.

ANSWERS TO THE DESERT QUIZ

1. Anywhere on earth.
2. Laguna pueblo is on the bank of the San Jose River.
3. Quartzsite
4. Skin of newly hatched Roadrunners is oily-black, with a few stiff white hairs.
5. On a plateau northwest of Flagstaff.
6. Silicate of copper
7. "Apartment house" constructed by unknown Indians of the Southwest.
8. It is a translation of their Indian name (Papah-oo-tam).
9. Coal Deposits
10. The Colorado River
11. False. Lowest elevation is at Badwater in Death Valley.
12. True
13. True
14. True
15. False. First to come were "Mountain Men" who were mainly trappers. Some came as early as 1820's, long before the discovery of gold.

Adventures Along the Unknown Colorado

(1826)

by the Desert Staff

The year was 1826. The place: the unexplored waters of the Gulf of California.

In command of the 25 ton BRUJA, sailing northward toward the mouth of the Rio Colorado (Colorado River) was Lt. R.W.H. Hardy, an Englishman "engaged in the capacity of a commissioner by the General Pearl and Coral Fishery Association of London" to find beds of pearl oysters. His employers also gave "great latitude in my endeavors and urged my greatest alertness for sunken ships or gold and silver mines."

However, Lt. Hardy was more than the typical nineteenth century English businessman---he was a wonderfully alert, amazingly curious and humorous person. It is possible to reflect on his life and times because of a book he authored, TRAVELS IN THE INTERIOR OF MEXICO, 1825, 1826, 1827, and 1828.

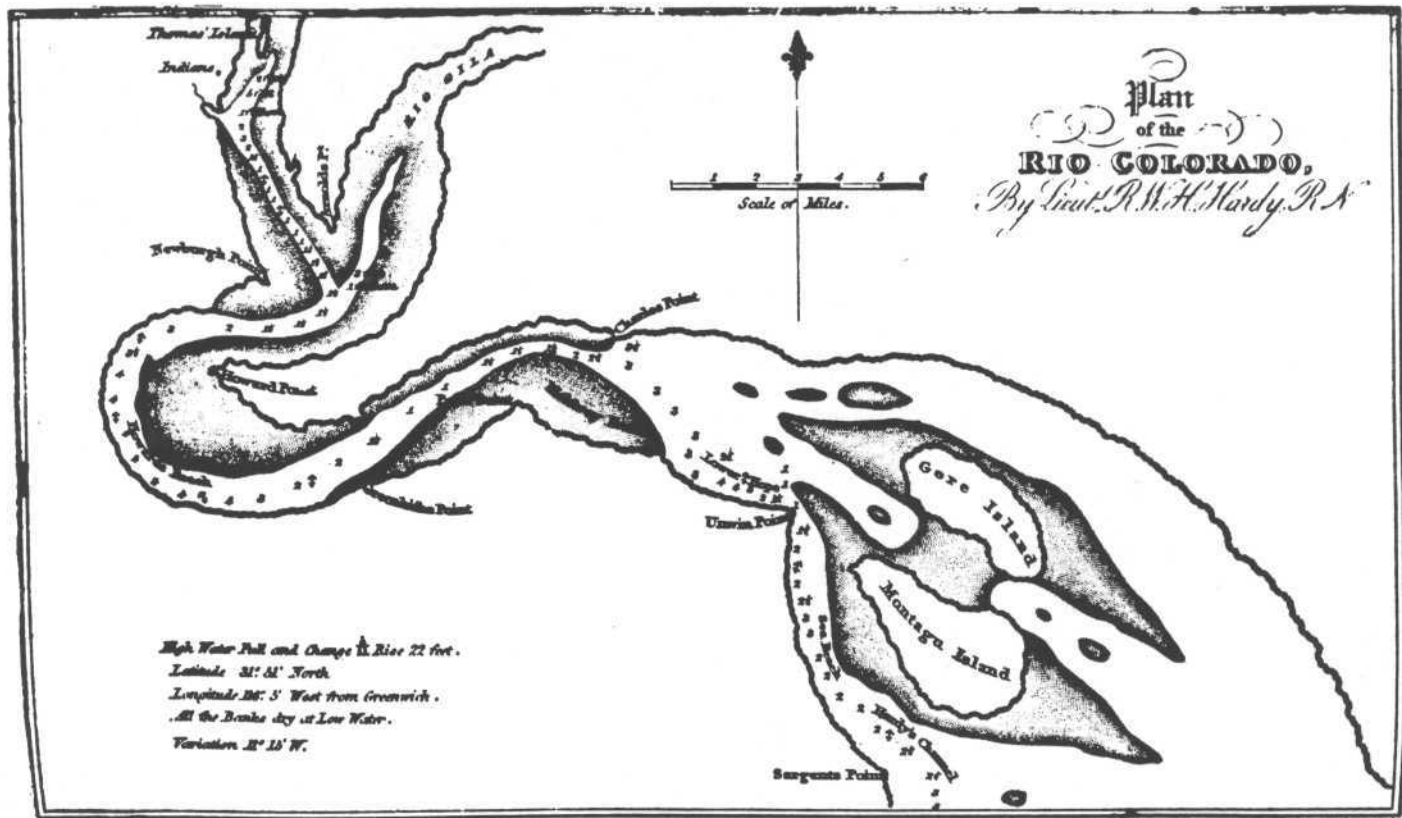
Of his shipmates, Lt. Hardy said: "Our crew was composed of the most wretched set of people, in the shape of men and sailors, that ever set foot on the deck of a vessel. The captain was an Englishman. Two seamen . . . were also Englishmen. Two were Italians; one a Mexican servant; one California Yuma Indian, who was the diver, and two Indians from the Manilas . . . These were all the living souls, except flies, fleas, bugs, etc., on board the BRUJA."

Navigating without chronometer, sextant, or even a nautical almanac, Lt. Hardy had only the very incomplete "Chart of the Gulf and West Coast of North America,"



Cocopas (above) were less-warlike than their northern cousins, the Yumas.

Map Hardy drew of the Colorado River mouth. His "Rio Gila" is the east or main channel of the river today. West channel was named Rio Hardy in his honor.



London. Published by Henry Colburn. New Burlington Str. Aug. 8 1828.

published by Arrowsmith of London, to guide him. The mapmakers, Arrowsmith, were unfamiliar with the northern Gulf and sketched in that area from information supplied to them by Indian pearl divers. However, this information was not verified.

A few miles upstream, the tide caught the BRUJA and swept it along "like an arrow at the rate of nine miles an hour. Ten yards from the bank the helmsman took fright, the vessel smashed into a sand bank and, with a tremendous crash the rudder was carried away. They had to work fast. A new storm fell upon them, and in a slashing rain, Lt. Hardy ordered the ship secured in the middle of the channel. A new rudder was quickly constructed and Hardy tied a rope around his chest and dove under the ship to examine the damage.

"We waited . . . in the hope that, at slack water, we might be able to ship our rudder, but, in the Rio Colorado, there is no such thing as slack water." However, the worst was yet to come.

"Before the ebb had finished running, the flood commenced,

boiling up a full 18 inches above the surface, and roaring like the rapids of Canada."

The BRUJA was caught in the Colorado's tidal bore. This phenomenon, only known to a few rivers in the world, took Lt. Hardy by surprise. He let the BRUJA drift while all hands attempted a last desperate effort to secure the rudder. The vessel went fast aground, and before he could order his men to pole the ship off the sand, the tide fell just as rapidly as it had risen. The BRUJA was left 200 yards from the water's edge.

All was made ready to ride out the next tide, but to Lt. Hardy's great amazement, high water found them still 150 yards from the river. They would have to wait for a full moon and its crest tide. He considered abandoning the ship, but decided against it for he did not want some future explorer to encounter such a "monument to our misfortune as our abandoned vessel would have presented."

Now the BRUJA'S crew prepared for a danger equal to that of the Rio Colorado: Indians. They were in Cocopa territory. This small tribe

had reached its peak of cultural greatness and strength some 50 years earlier. In 1775, they numbered about 3000, but by 1826, they were in steady decline. These tribesmen chiefly subsisted on a diet of corn, melons, pumpkins, and beans, which they cultivated. They were thought to be less warlike than their cousins to the north, the Yumas, but when the occasion called for it, they turned into savage fighters.

The morning after the ship had been caught in a gale, Lt. Hardy saw before him what he supposed to be the mouth of the great River. Boldly he sailed forward--only to find a bay on the coast of Sonora. The lieutenant had served in the Royal Navy from 1806 to 1815, and his training as a British officer left him with excellent qualifications for making and recording scientific observations. He mapped the area and named it "Adair Bay"--the name it bears to this day.

Two days later, after bucking a new storm, the Bruja found the Rio Colorado's delta. Lt. Hardy reported: ". . . we saw an opening ahead, which appeared to be the mouth of the river; and both seas were

covered with a delicate green, arising from the herbage growing on the banks . . . the river had clearly two, if not three mouths, and the land on either side was very low . . . having now lost all apprehension of danger, we were proceeding forward carelessly, when, to our astonishment, we observed breakers close under our bow. We immediately hauled our wind on the starboard tack, and, having cleared this new danger, we again bore up, and reached the entrance to the Rio Colorado . . . here we came to an anchor for the night . . . ”

Before retiring for the night, Lt. Hardy sounded four fathoms of water below the BRUJA.

The next morning he received his first lesson in the river's treachery.

To his consternation, there was just enough water for the ship to maneuver in. The range and violence of the tides at the mouth of the Colorado were to further plague him as his tiny ship moved inland.

He took time off to name the two islands at the river's mouth: "the largest . . . I have named after my earliest, best, and most honored patron and friend, Admiral Sir George Montagu, G.C.B. (note: today it is called Isla Mantague). The other I have called Gore Island . . . ”

Lt. Hardy knew little of the Cocopa, in fact, he did not at first distinguish between them and the Yumas who occupied both sides of the Rio Colorado in the vicinity of present day Yuma, Arizona. Masters of the only safe fording place on the lower Colorado, the Yumas had revolted in July 1781 and wiped out the Spanish fort and mission at the crossing. Hardy gave these Indians credit for their stand against the Spaniards--despite the fact he was in immediate danger of sharing the same fate.

As the tides continued to drop, Hardy reconnoitered the area in a canoe. Relying on a compass for bearing, and dead reckoning and estimation for distances, he charted the mouth of the Rio Colorado, complete with low water readings.



Yumas were the much-feared masters of the lower Colorado River.

The Arrowsmith map was confusing and it caused him to make one glaring error in his map. He showed the Gila River joining the Colorado at the head of the funnel-shaped estuary. Actually, this was the east (now main) channel of the Colorado. The west fork, which Hardy called the Colorado and which very likely could have been the main channel of the river at that time, bears the name Hardy River today.

Hardy's description of the river's mouth would still apply today:

"On the western side of the river there are forests of the thorny shrub called mesquite, an inferior species of quebrahacha . . . on the banks there was a profusion of stems and large branches of the willow, poplar, and acacia, which had been brought down by flood . . . on the eastern bank, where we were aground, there were also wrecks of these trees; but there was no other vegetation but a dwarf sort of reed . . . ”

He told the men who accompanied him on these explorations to be on a sharp lookout for cattle. Provisions on the BRUJA were dangerously low.

Presently they came upon some horses quietly grazing. "They were not in the least alarmed at the appearance of strangers--from which circumstance I knew that they must be tame, and belonging to human creatures . . . ”

On the left bank of the river they found a hut occupied by six old men and two old women who showed great displeasure in seeing the white men. By sign language and deep grunts the Indians conveyed to Lt. Hardy that he had better depart as quickly as possible because the country was sarming with Indians who would chastise him for this unwelcomed intrusion.

Undismayed, Hardy made a speech--beginning it in Spanish and ending in English--finding one language as unintelligible as the other.

But there were two other languages all Indians understood: force and barter. Hardy chose barter. Whipping out tobacco and a few printed cotton handkerchiefs, he traded them to the Indians for fish and other food.

Indians, Lt. Hardy knew, almost always welcomed traders. When a trader was killed, it was years before another dared bring the esteemed wonders of the white man's world to the tribesmen.

Next day, two Indians approached "One of them had also a small quantity of raw cotton in a basket, which I presume he brought as a present, as he gave it to me without seeming to expect any return. I made signs to him to bring down cattle, but as he did not understand what I meant, I drew a cow with a stick in the sand, which seemed to convey my meaning, for he nodded his head in token of assent, pointing at the same time to the road by which he had come."

So far, so good. The word was out that Lt. Hardy was a trader. As soon as the Indians were out of sight, he ordered a tightening of the BRUJA's rather absurd defensive position. An extra quantity of grape was introduced into the cannonades, which could only be fired once because of the deck's angle of incline. The matches were lighted and placed in their proper situations, and the crew's muskets carefully examined and "three buck shot added to their present charge." The boarding net was extended around the vessel.

Next morning 13 Indians visited the ship. After making sure they were unarmed, they were allowed aboard. They showed great curiosity in the ship's hull, masts and rigging. At noon more Indians arrived and the first 13 were ordered to depart. One of the newly arrived Indians, whom Lt. Hardy judged to be a sub-chief, cried out lustily, "Bueno, bueno," as he approached the vessel.

More Spanish than this, however, he did not understand, but as soon as he cast his eyes upon our diver, also an Indian, he addressed him, as as I afterwards learned, in his vernacular language, which is the Yuma. We had thus, unexpectedly, an interpreter . . . In reply to my questions, he said there were no horned cattle in his country, and only a few horses. Melons, zandias, pumpkins and maize, he said the Capitan Grande would send down, as soon as the true objects of our visits were explained to him."

Before the party departed, Lt. Hardy shot off a cannon, hoping it would leave a lasting impression on the curious visitors--one that they would convey to their Capitan Grande.

A few hours later another party appeared. They explained that the Capitan had dispatched them to manifest his expressions of welcome, and to embrace the visitors and to offer to them the great Capitan's protection. The cannon shot had not been wasted.

One of the Indians, whom Lt. Hardy recognized as having been on the ship earlier, came forward and conversed with them in Spanish.

"This circumstance," Lt. Hardy, wrote, "awakened a little suspicion, and I determined to be very cautious in my future dealings with his tribe."

The next day brought an incredible scene to the BRUJA'S

Lt. Hardy, the cultured English gentleman stranded 200 yards from the raging Colorado, was host to the powerful Capitan Grande--who used the tiny craft as a speaker's platform to address the hundreds of Indians who sat in the sand completely encircling the vessel.

After the talk, Lt. Hardy casually inquired as to the import of the oration just delivered.

The interpreter answered that the Capitan had made a "war speech" to his people, reminding them that the Great Spirit had given the care of the nation to the safe keeping of its chiefs; and that these were the leaders around whom the Indians should assemble with submission and a fixed determination to abide by their counsels.

As the Capitan was taking his bows, Lt. Hardy ordered his men to begin trading. Commerce erased some of the tension. That night, Lt. Hardy suggested that the Capitan and his interpreter remain on board, under the charge of sentinels.

Next day, the Capitan did Lt. Hardy one better. Instead of making war speeches, he held a council of war on the BRUJA's deck with several of his sub-chiefs.

During the afternoon hundreds of Indians swam across from the other side of the river. Several more sub-chiefs and an old woman joined the council.

"Her age could not, I think, have been less than 120, and her body was more shriveled than I had supposed possible in a living creature. Her face was painted yellow . . ."

The deliberation gained impetus when the chief-of-chiefs, the great and powerful Cacique, joined it. Lt. Hardy had to move fast. He trained two blunderbusses on the warriors.

Fishing village of San Felipe on the east coast of Baja California. Hardy's charts indicate he sailed his small vessel near this beach.



This had a "magic effect" on them, for the council immediately broke up. The Cacique departed with all except Capitan Grande, the interpreter, and the old woman.

"Soon after this I ordered dinner on deck, and invited the remaining party."

An Indian whom he had met some days earlier, joined them.

"... finding his friends seated round a tablecloth, and quietly devouring the good things which had been laid upon it, he thought he too might look out for a spare berth, which he attempted to do in the first place, by putting his foot, which was still covered with mud, on the middle of our table."

This enraged Lt. Hardy, but his guests went on eating as if nothing had happened.

Soon after the meal, all the Indians who had departed earlier returned, the great majority of them still unarmed as ordered by Lt. Hardy.

Capitan Grande pointed out to his colleagues that they outnumbered the white men 500 to 1; that it would be a simple matter to drive the foreigners into the ship's cabin under a hail of arrows; and once in that position, the Indians could enter the vessel at its stern and secure the prisoners.

The great Cacique grunted his approval to Capitan Grande's plan and called for the interpreter.

And now, for the trap: It seemed, he told Lt. Hardy, that a neighboring nation of Indians had attacked the tribe the preceding evening, and besides killing a great number of men, had carried away several women and children. To revenge this outrage, the great chief was determined to march all his warriors against the aggressors. But, before he started he had a favor to ask of Lt. Hardy: could the Indians please assemble, equipped with their arms, in front of the vessel? In that way, he hastened to add, they could make a formal and friendly farewell to the BRUJA and its crew.

Lt. Hardy, suppressing a great desire to laugh out in astonishment, replied with calmness:

"I desired the interpreter to tell the Great Chief that I wished him every success in expedition against the Yumas; but that I could not suffer the assemblage of armed men near our vessel; and that if such a measure were attempted, I should consider their intentions as hostile toward myself, and should certainly fire upon them."

Lt. Hardy's answer obviously disappointed the Great Chief. Sulking, he departed from the ship.

That night no one aboard the BRUJA dared sleep. Next day the Indians assembled as usual, and "so great was their number that they extended along the banks of the river nearly as far as the eye could reach."

The great CACIQUE did not make his appearance, but the CAPITAN and his interpreter were busily forming plans "to lure Lt. Hardy away from the ship."

Lt. Hardy ordered the Indians out of the area, and also suspended trade for six days. He needed this time, for his calculations told him that the crest tide would be in then.

The old woman who had been a dinner guest on the BRUJA, began shaking a leather rattle, accompanying this sound with a low hum.

Hearing her song, the despairing Indians became excited. They were being lulled into a war spirit!

Lt. Hardy acted quickly. He fixed his guns on the medicine woman and the CAPITAN, and sternly ordered them to leave.

As the old woman turned to go, Lt. Hardy, the diplomat, gave her four leaves of tobacco and a narrow strip of red cloth which she immediately tied around her head to bind together her muddy hair.

Apparently, the gifts touched the aged woman.

"... with the expression of a sort of smile on her haggard countenance, she took my hand, and said, 'Adios, adios!'"

The Englishman Hardy, one of the earliest explorers of the upper Gulf of California and the mouth of the Colorado River, left an invaluable record of his New World adventures in a book published in 1829, the year after he returned to London. Clear thinking and capable, Hardy twice escaped disaster on the Colorado: from the river itself, and from the Cocopas who dwelled on its banks.

An armed youth stepped in front of the departing woman and presented her with his arrows.

"She gazed at him an instant' then seizing the proffered arms, she muttered something between her teeth, and threw them on the ground with the violence, apparently to the great chagrin of all the Indians."

Their strategy spent, the Cocopas retired.

The tide was steadily rising, and on July 29, 1826 (Lt. Hardy entered the Colorado on the 20th), the ship moved into deep water.

The commercial consequences of Lt. Hardy's explorations were fruitless. He found neither rich pearl waters, sunken vessels or precious metals. His journal is the real treasure to come from this adventure.

The Pony Express in Nevada

by Desert Staff

Thundering across the west for a year and a half, through heat and storm and the dark of night, riders of the Pony Express rode their mounts over nearly two-thirds of a million miles of wilderness trail to make history that will live forever.

At the time the Pony Express was inaugurated, April 1860, the only states west of the Missouri River were California and Oregon, the remainder of the Country embraced within several territories. One of the largest of these was Utah Territory, usually referred to as "The Great American Desert". Extending some 600 miles from the California line to the western boundry of Nebraska Territory, Utah Territory included not only the present states of Utah and Nevada, but also large portions of Wyoming and Colorado and part of Arizona.

Then, as now, this was the least explored region of its size in our nation, excluding Alaska, and one of the most sparsely populated areas. In the watered valleys north and south of the Great Salt Lake, a few determined Mormons had been struggling for a dozen years to establish homes and farms, and the mining men were beginning to collect at the new camp of Virginia City where silver had been discovered the previous summer. Otherwise, settlers were few and far between, and even those few lived in a state of jeopardy, constantly threatened by hostile bands of Ute, Paiute,

and Goshute Indians, who resented this foreign intrusion by the white man.

In consequence, the 500 miles from Salt Lake City to the Carson Valley became the most hazardous Link in the 1,966 mile system. On this Utah Territory trail were the longest unbroken stretches without water.

Our appreciation of history never comes into full view until we stand on the spot where that history was made. For this reason, if possible the history buff should try to visit the site of his interest. Many of us like to read about Ghost Towns, but how many of us have ever spent a day or two (and a night) camped in an abandoned cabin in an unoccupied Ghost Town? It is an experience that is difficult to express except to say that we can experience a little of what it was like then as compared to now. This is especially true of the Pony Express. The route it followed in Nevada is not always easy to get to and sometimes harder to follow. Station sites are unknown or remote. Ruins are difficult to locate. We have travelled over or close to most of the Pony Route in Nevada. Even the surrounding camps and towns are deeply steeped in history.

It is an interesting experience to travel from Dayton (Chinatown) down along the Carson River towards Clifton and Fort Churchill and imagine what it was like 124 years ago when the Indians were hostile, the country untamed, and the Pony carried the mail.

The following is a list of the Pony Express stations in Nevada and what remains that can be found. Our list starts on the west at the present day Woodfords and proceeds east to the Utah State Line. In some cases, we have listed stations built for the Overland Stage that are suspected of having been used by the Pony.

WOODFORD'S STATION

Short term station, April 3 to 29, 1860. Station was at Cary's Barn. Post Office known as Cary's Station later Woodfords. Only a historical marker identifies the site. Actually in California.

FRIDAYS STATION

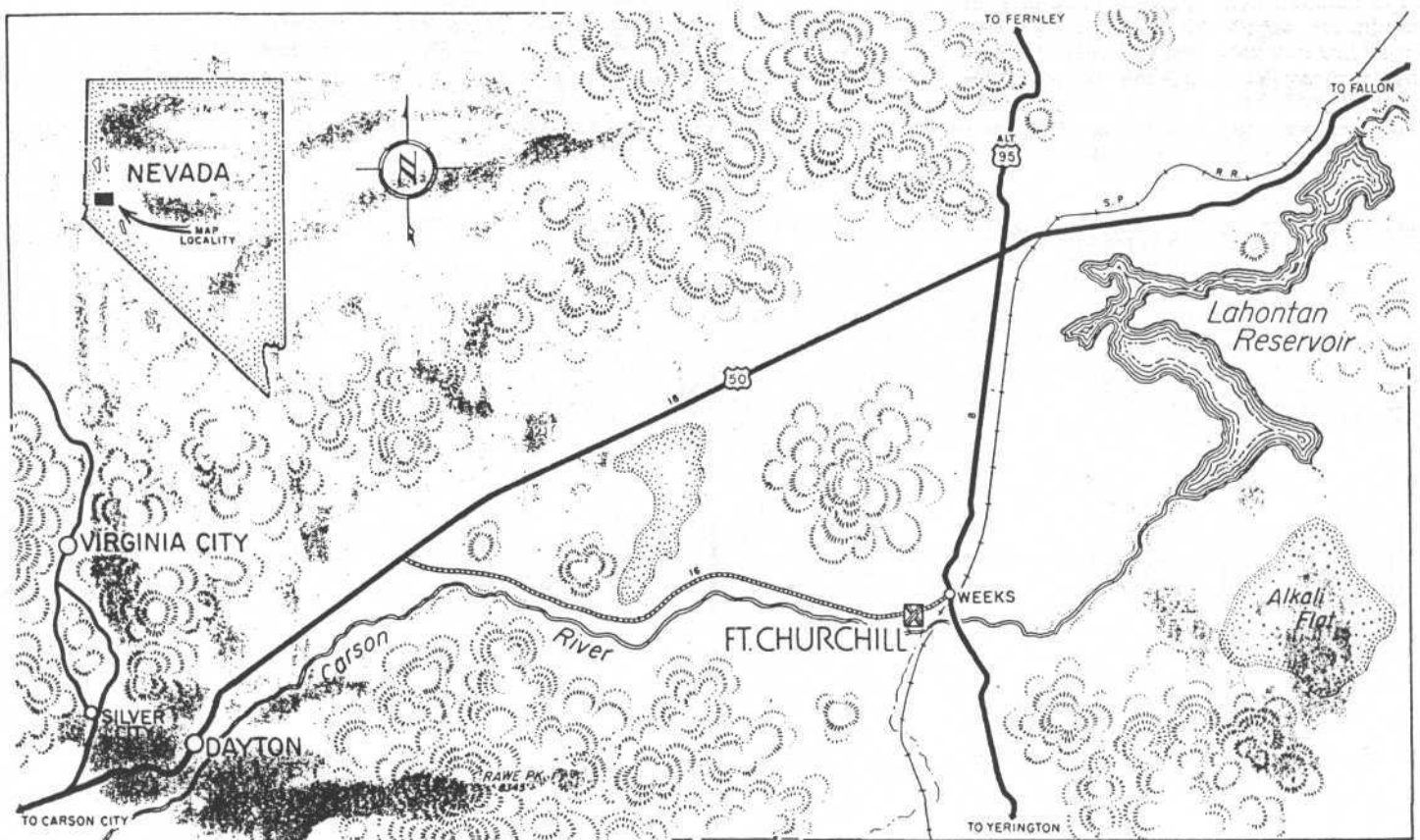
Located one mile east of stateline at Lake Tahoe. Original Blacksmith's shop remains. Named after a Mr. "Friday" Burke who operated this station and resting place along the Mac Donald toll road.

GENOA

Originally called Mormon Station. Station site is believed to be where a picnic area is located on the Main Street.

CARSON CITY

Site location unknown. Believed to be on Carson Street (US 395-50) between 4th and 5th Streets.



*Fort Churchill as it
appeared in 1984.*

DAYTON

Town originally called Chinatown. Station was located first at Spafford Hall's Station. Later moved to site of Union Hotel. No ruins remain.

MILLER'S STATION

Later known as Reed's Station. No ruins remain but site is approximately 8 miles from Dayton along the old river road.

FORT CHURCHILL

Site now a state park. See *DESERT*, October 1983. No ruins remain from the Pony. Located 8 miles south of Silver Springs.

BUCKLAND'S STATION

Only a mile from Fort Churchill. Used prior to the opening of the Fort. Site now known as Weeks. No Pony ruins remain.

COATES WELL (HOOTEN WELLS)

A station added in the later days of the Pony. Located 12 miles east of Bucklands. rock ruins remain.

CARSON SINK

Named for the area where the waters of the Carson River "sink" into the ground. Was a large station with 4 or 5 buildings. Very little remains today--outlines of walls are barely visible.

SALT WELLS

A station maybe. Listed in research by Nell Murberger, but not by others. Site was east of Fallon approximately where Highway 50 and the Pony route join.

SAND SPRINGS

Named for the drifting mounds of Sand located there. Sited location is unknown but is suspected to be just off Highway 50 at the Sand Mountain turnoff.

MIDDLE GATE

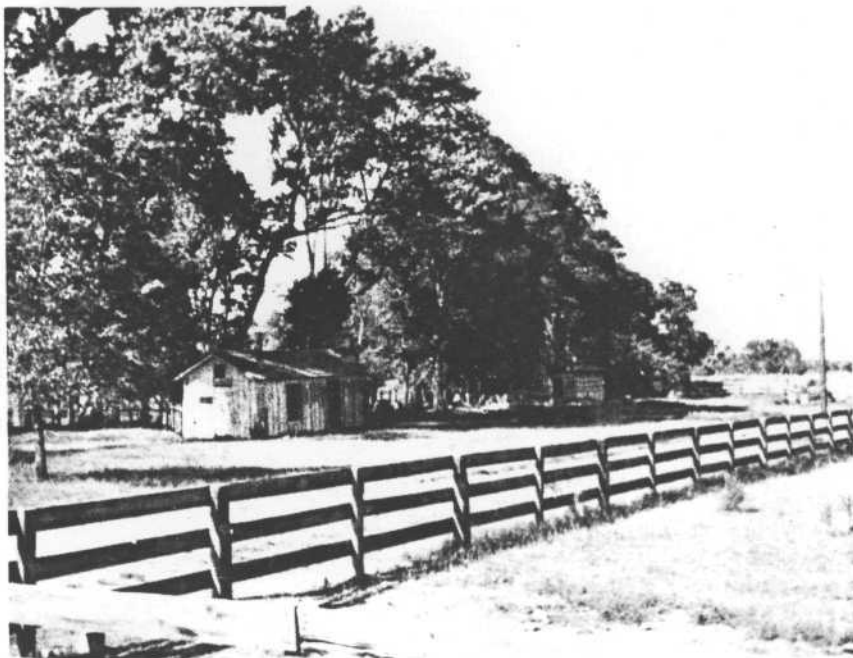
Another possible station. Again listed by Nell Murberger. Located midway between Sand Springs and Cold Springs. Actual site unknown.

COLD SPRINGS

Located about 1½ miles east of Highway 50 at a point 59 miles east of Fallon. Some ruins remain--a rock one 55' x 135' with 2 foot thick walls, corral, etc.

EDWARDS CREEK

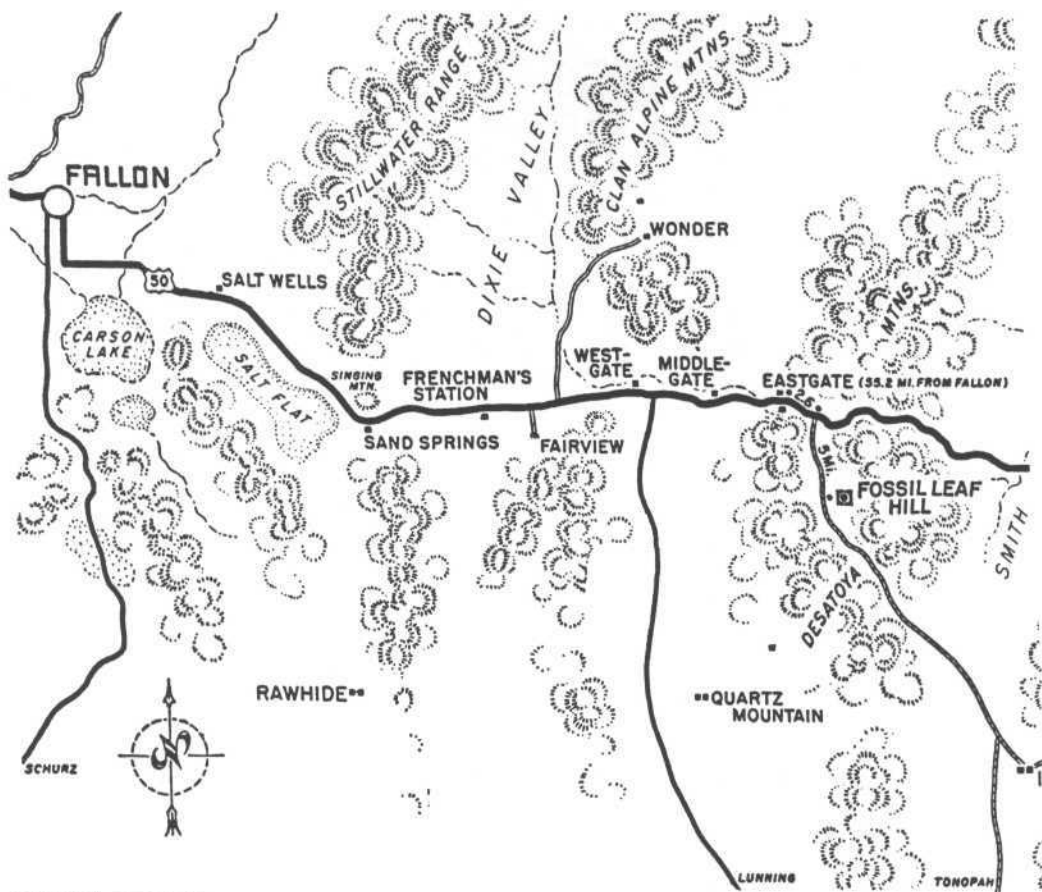
Also a maybe site. Nell Murberger says it was located between Cold Springs and Smith Creek.



The Meadow by the Carson River at Buckland's Station.



This building at present day Weeks is near the site of the Pony Station.



SMITH CREEK

Located 14 miles north of the highway on the Smith Creek Ranch. (Private Property). Corral and adobe building with later rock addition exist.

DRY WELL(S)

Located just north of Railroad Pass in the Shoshone Mountains. Was added as a station at a later date. No visible ruins remain. Was also a station site for the Overland Stage but was moved to Mt. Airy in 1862 or 1863.

JACOBS SPRINGS (STATION)

Station named after district agent, Washington Jacobs. Jacobsville, the town, was a forerunner of Austin. Name changed to Reese River. Station later moved to Austin. Not much remains to see. Site of station is north of present day Austin.

SIMPSON PARK

Located 15 miles northeast of Austin. Foundation ruins remain along with a fast disappearing cemetery site to the north. Land is privately owned.

DRY CREEK

Site is on the Dry Creek Ranch 4 miles north of Highway 50. Rock ruins remain on private property. Also identifiable is the Pony route to the west called Streep's Cutoff.

GRUBB'S WELL

Station was added to the route in the summer of 1861. No ruins remain. Site is eight miles north of Highway 50.

ROBERT'S CREEK

Site is 15 miles north of Highway 50 on the Roberts Creek Ranch. No ruins remain.

SULPHUR SPRINGS (GOODWINS)

Was probably built for the Overland Stage in July 1861 and months. Site is on privately owned land now called the Diamond Star Ranch. Ruins are at the Springs which are fenced off from access.

DIAMOND SPRINGS

Was added to the Pony route at a later date. No ruins remain. Site originally consisted of a stone cabin and hand dug well.

RUBY VALLEY

No ruins remain at sites. Station was moved to Elko for use in a museum display.

MOUNTAIN SPRING(S)

Not an original Pony Express Station. Built around July 1861 for the Overland Stage. Used by the Pony for only 4 months. No ruins remain and site is on private property.

BUTTE STATION

Site is on the east side of the Butte Mountains overlooking Butte Mountain. Some stone foundations remain and the ruins of a large fireplace that served the station.

EGAN STATION (CANYON)

Only stone foundations, fast disappearing, remain. Site is on private property. Was an active locale for Indian trouble. Located Egan Canyon.

SCHELL CREEK

Site later known as Fort Shellbourne and then Schellbourne. Station site is unknown but suspected to be onw of 2 log structures near the creek. Numerous other ruins remain, but are on private property.

SPRING VALLEY

Site is unknown. Was added as a Pony Station after October 1860.

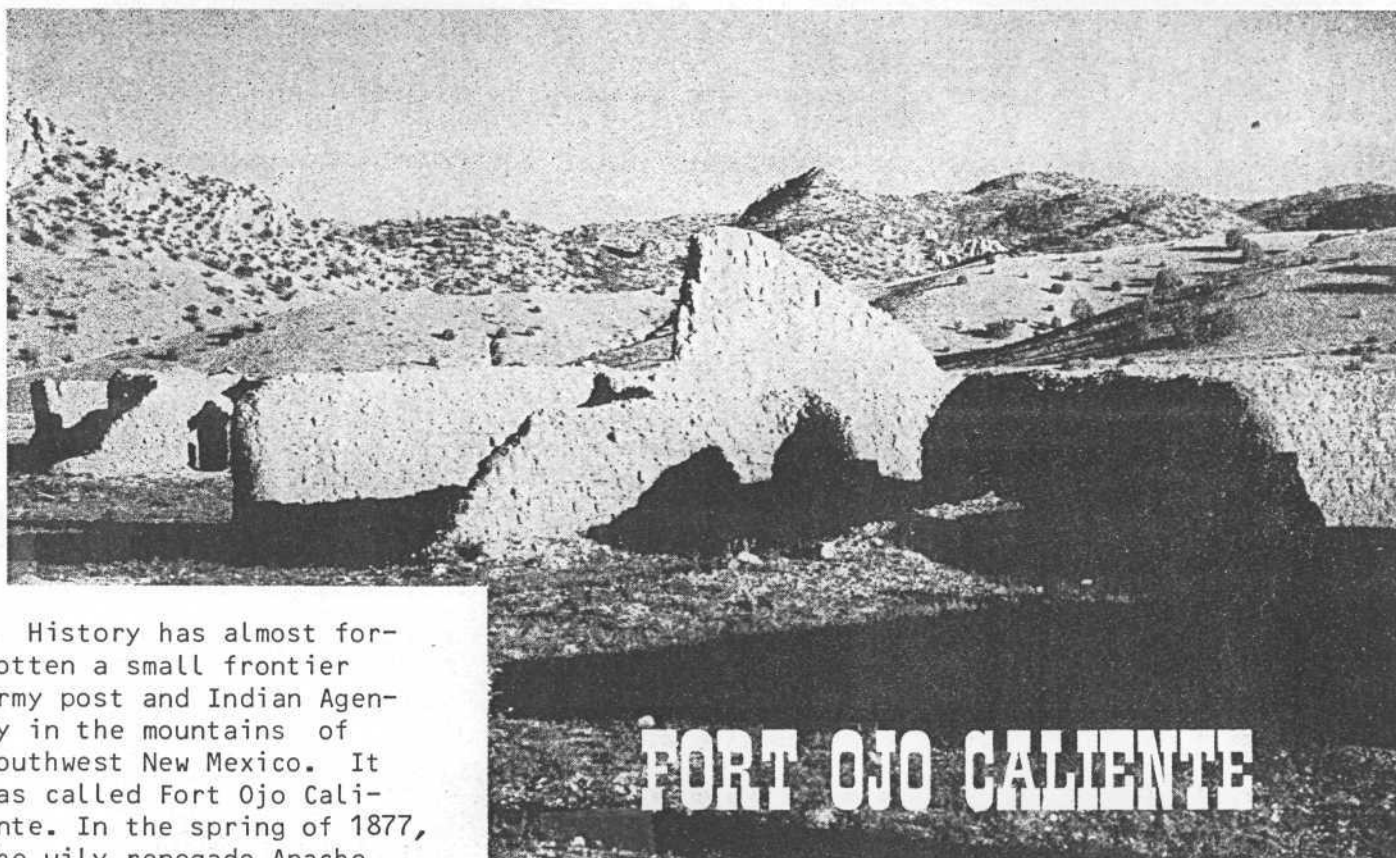
ANTELOPE SPRINGS

Was a short lived station. Was burnt by Indians in June 1861 and not rebuilt by the Pony. Later used by the Overland Stage. Site is on private property and some ruins remain although it is not known if they were used by the Pony.

EIGHT MILE STATION

If this station existed, it would be the eastern most site in Nevada. Supposedly was located 8 miles west of the Deep Creek, Utah Territory Station, just inside the Nevada Boundry.

The Apache policemen hid in the adobe buildings, and when Geronimo entered the parade ground he fell into their trap . . .



History has almost forgotten a small frontier Army post and Indian Agency in the mountains of southwest New Mexico. It was called Fort Ojo Caliente. In the spring of 1877, the wily renegade Apache Chief Geronimo was outritted by a bold, young and resourceful Indian Agent by the name of John Clum. Here at Fort Ojo Caliente, for the first and only time in his renegade career, the Chiricahua raider was captured and clamped in chains.

Virtual obscurity has been Fort Ojo Caliente's fate, and today the old fort lies forgotten in its remote mountain valley location. Few people visit its decaying walls, relics of a turbulent and romantic era. The site is on posted property so permission to enter must be obtained.

To reach the site today, take I-25 north of Truth or Consequences (shown as Hot Springs on older maps) to State Road 52. This is Legendary Apache country. Proceed west on this road. The first settlement you will come to is Cuchillo,

Nine(9) miles from the interstate.

Cuchillo was a former trading center midway between the mines of Chloride and Winston and the railroad station(now torn down) at Engle. Be sure to visit the Cuchillo store and examine its vast collection of memorabilia.

The back country road climbs rapidly out of the Rio Grande Valley and enters semi-desert country. North of you will be the San Mateo Mountains and to the west the Black Range.

Sun-splashed sage gave way to rolling hills. The green of pinyon and scrub pine contrasted sharply with the red earth. It is easy to understand why the

Apache Indians had fought so long and so hard to keep this land.

A small canyon carries the road across the southern tip of the San Mateos into a broad grassy valley striped with swift mountain creeks and dotted with clumps of pine and cedar. This is cattle country. Ranch houses and grazing herds dot the area.

Twenty miles from Cuchillo is the town of Fairview, now known as Winston. This semi-ghost features some photogenic buildings. An even better semi-ghost town to visit is 2.3 miles further out Forest Service Road 226--Chloride. There are numerous ruins, buildings, and

a real nice small town where one can sit back and enjoy the New Mexico style of rural living. This was a silver mining town and some of the mines are currently in production, although on a small scale.

At approximately 21 miles beyond Winston, along the rocky bed of the Alamosa River are the ruins of the Fort. Blending into the tan colored mountain backdrop are the crumbling adobe ruins of the fort. Sagging walls of barracks and other buildings framed an area that appeared to be old parade ground.

Fort Ojo Caliente was built in 1859 as an advance picket outpost for Fort Craig, some 50 miles to the east in the Rio Grande Valley near San Marcial. In the late 1860's, the fort became the agency headquarters for the Warm Springs Apache Reservation. Federal cavalry, "E" Troop, 4th Regiment, and elements of the 15th Infantry Regiment were garrisoned here from late 1877 to 1882. No records exist after 1882, however, Cherryville, the civilian portion of the Fort had a post office until 1886, so some activity must have occurred. Incidentally, we were unable to find any trace of the Cherryville townsite. The garrison usually numbered 60 officers and men, but during one period of heavy Indian fighting in 1881, over 200 men were stationed there.

Geronimo's career almost ended on this parade ground a decade before he made his final peace with the hated white eyes. John Clum was sent to New Mexico Territory



from his post at the San Carlos Agency to return Geronimo to the Arizona reservation. The Apache renegade was camped at the hot springs, three miles above Fort Ojo Caliente.

After a forced march from Arizona with 100 hand-picked Apache police, Clum baited his trap. He rode into Fort Ojo Caliente in broad daylight with 20 men at his side, aware that Geronimo's scouts were watching from the hills. Clum wanted the renegades to think he only had a small force with him. After making camp, Clum sent a demand to Geronimo that he come down to the fort and surrender.

Geronimo knew no Federal cavalry was garrisoned at the fort at this time. His

scouts told him of Clum's small force. The great Apache raider had over 100 brave warriors with him. Clum's demand to surrender must have made him laugh.

What Geronimo did not know was that Clum's remaining 80 Apache police had slipped into the fort under cover of darkness and were posted inside the buildings. Clum and his original 20 men lined upon the parade ground and waited. Would the great Geronimo take the bait?

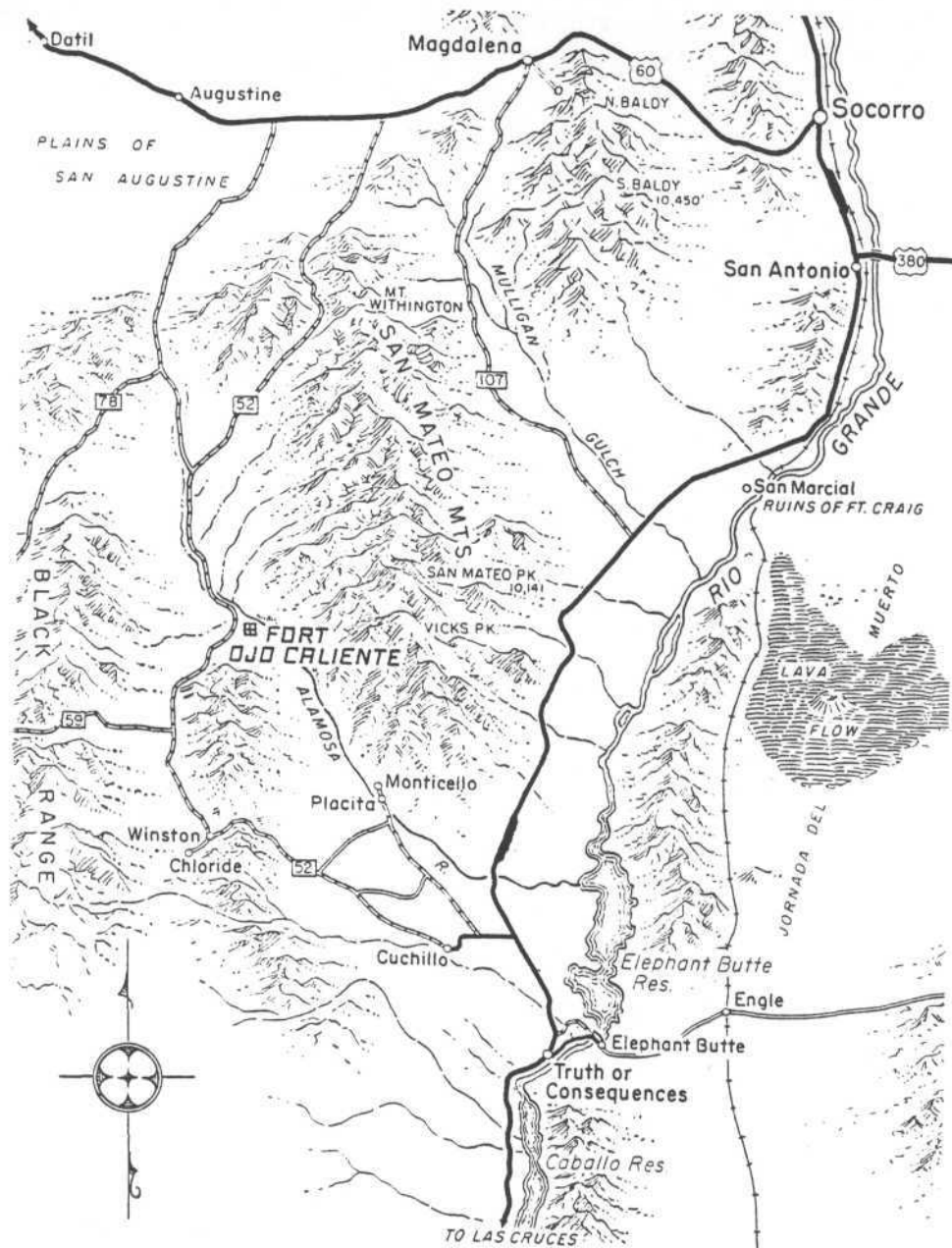
Shortly after dawn, Geronimo came to silence this little man who made big demands with few troops. The Chiricahuas fanned out behind their leader and boldly walked to within a few yards of Clum. The painted warriors halted and

Southwest. It wasn't until 1886 that starvation and sickness forced him to surrender to General Miles at Skeleton Canyon, Arizona.

John Clum went on to become the first mayor of Tombstone, Arizona, founded the famed frontier newspaper, *THE TOMBSTONE EPITAPH*, and was a staunch backer of the redoubtable Marshal Wyatt Earp.

The ruins consist of a line of crumbling walls, remnants of roofless buildings. The fort had been built after the fashion of an adobe pueblo. Walls were thick and windows set deep. To our amazement, the straw and earthen bricks used for the walls were flecked with bits of pottery. After some searching, I concluded that the building material had come from a refuse heap of an ancient Indian pueblo just west of the fort. In the crumbling ruins of the fort I found numerous pieces of black on white pottery characteristic of the Classic Pueblo III period. This would make the old Indian dwelling about 1000 years old. I wondered if the builders of the fort destroyed a valuable archeological site.

One mile east of the fort is a rugged box canyon with jagged red and black walls of volcanic origin. While hiking up the river bed toward the canyon, we came upon a section of river bank that was sprinkled with empty cartridge cases--old .45 colt casings made of copper. As this was a very old type of cartridge, we wondered if this



waited for their chief to signal them to wipe out the brave little band before them.

Clum again called for Geronimo's surrender. Twenty rifles were leveled at the chief's heart. Geronimo must have thought how foolish this little man was--his 100 brave warriors could kill all of Clum's men before they had a chance to fire their rifles. Then, at Clum's signal, the 80 Apache police swept from their hiding places and encircled the parade ground.

The renegade band of Apaches were surrounded.

Geronimo, knowing he would be the first to die in any battle that might arise from this confrontation, surrendered. He could see the odds were not in his favor. Quickly, Clum's men had the Apache Chief and five of his sub-chiefs in chains. The remainder of Geronimo's band were disarmed.

Several weeks later in Arizona, Geronimo escaped from his cell. During the next nine years, he left a bloody trail across the

could have been the target range.

While the fort deteriorated rapidly after its official abandonment in 1882(?) several buildings were repaired and used by families for living quarters around the turn of the century. By the early 1920's, these squatters left and Fort Ojo Caliente, now plain Ojo Caliente, became the social center of the area. Ranchers and their families would gather there for weekly square dances.

During the depression days of the early 1930's, residents of the valley stripped lumber from the fort building's roofs to repair their homes and ranch buildings. The old fort was a good source of free lumber as people didn't have enough money to buy building materials in those depressed times.

Ojo Caliente also has its share of legends --- stories that are hard to prove or disprove. One tale concerns Geronimo while he was a prisoner at the Fort awaiting transfer back to Arizona. The Apache leader reportedly offered to fill a room at the fort with gold within 24 hours in exchange for his freedom. The Indians knew of a rich mine somewhere close by and could reward anyone who would give them their freedom. No one knew these hills and mountains as well as the Apache and they told their secrets to no outsider.

Years later, an old Indian came to the valley of Ojo Caliente. He claimed he had been raised with Geronimo, had known of the Apache Gold Mine, and now, after the passing of Geronimo and most of his band, had returned to find it. The old Indian described the entrance to the mine tunnel as being under a white rock that looked like a white cow standing in the brush of a hillside. He searched for several years, but never found the lost Apache Gold Mine.

Another legend has it that a missing fortune of gold lies buried near the fort---six mule loads of gold buried by Mexican vaqueros. In the early 1800's, so the legend goes, the Mexicans were packing the gold from Santa Fe to Sonora when they were attacked by Apaches. After a running battle, the Mexicans temporarily eluded their pursuers and buried the treasure in a shallow cave in a canyon near the ruins of an Indian pueblo. They turned their mules loose and fled on foot.

Only one of the vaqueros lived to read Socorro, north of the fort, and on the east side of the San Mateo Mountains. Before he died of his wounds, he gave a map of the treasure site to a man named Flores who searched many years for the cached gold, without success.

However, in the 1920's, cowboys reported finding six old Mexican pack saddles in a cave near the fort. Many area residents believe a fortune in gold still lies buried in that cave---or in the immediate vicinity. Who really knows? Fort Ojo Caliente is silent now, her secrets slowly disappearing into the soil and sand of New Mexico and the history books of another time.

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Calendar of Western Events

AUGUST 11, 1984

The Colorado State Gold Panning Championship, sponsored by Gold Prospectors of Colorado will be held along with a mining fair and exhibits at Fairplay, Colorado.

AUGUST 11-12, 1984

Goldfield Treasure Days, Goldfield, Nevada; Parade, Silver and gold hunt, much more.

AUGUST 17-19, 1984

Churchill County Fair, Fallon, Nevada; Features pig races, mucking contest, tractor pull, more.

AUGUST 17-19, 1984

Rodeo, Payson, Arizona; A good, top quality old fashioned western rodeo.

AUGUST 20-25, 1984

Salt Lake County Fair, Murray, Utah.

AUGUST 23-26, 1984

Lyon County Fair, Yerington, Nevada; Interesting rural fair in this agricultural area.

AUGUST 24, 1984

White Pine County Conbelles Barbecue. Fee charged. Murray Summit Campground, Ely, Nevada.

AUGUST 24-26, 1984

Nevada State and World Gold Panning Championships, Karl's Silver Club--- Sparks, Nevada.

AUGUST 24-26, 1984

Eureka County Fair, Eureka, Nevada; Good, old time, rural County Fair.

AUGUST 25-26, 1984

White Pine County Fair, Ely, Nevada; While there be sure to visit the Museum.

AUGUST 31-SEPT. 3, 1984

Pioche Labor Day Celebration, Pioche, Nevada; Parade, dance, mining contests.

AUGUST 31-SEPT. 3, 1984

Coconino County Fair, Ft. Tuthill, Arizona.

SEPTEMBER 1-3, 1984

Wildwest Days, Tombstone, Arizona.

SEPTEMBER 1-3, 1984

Sourdough Days Fair, Sutter Hill, California. (Just north of Martel, California); Arts and Crafts show, a tour of the famous Kennedy (Gold) Mine in Jackson, more.

SEPTEMBER 5-9, 1984

Nevada State Fair, Reno, Nevada at the Fairgrounds. Carnival, Rodeo, etc. Admission charged.

SEPTEMBER 6-16, 1984

Utah State Fair, Salt Lake City, Utah. Exhibits, competitions. Good family fair.

SEPTEMBER 6-8, 1984

Southern Utah Folklife Festival, Zion National Park.

SEPTEMBER 9-14, 1984

Las Vegas, Nevada---Jaycee's State Fair; Largest fair event in Southern Nevada.

SEPTEMBER 11-23, 1984

New Mexico State Fair, Albuquerque, New Mexico. Horse racing, rodeo, carnival, Indian and Spanish villages.

SEPTEMBER 13-30, 1984

Los Angeles County Fair, Pomona, Cal.

NOVEMBER 3-4, 1984

Yucca Valley Gem and Mineral Society Show, "It is a Rockhounds World". Community Center; Yucca Valley, California. Exhibits, dealers.

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Hard Rock Shorty of Death Valley



"There comes that dude prospector again," remarked Hard Rock Shorty as a shiny new Model T stopped in front of the Inferno store and the driver approached the lean-to porch where Shorty and a couple of other old-timers were taking turns reading a three-week-old newspaper.

The newcomer was decked out in a plaid shirt, well-creased riding breeches and polished leather puttees.

"I thought Death Valley was full of snakes," the visitor greeted them, "but I haven't seen one yet. What's become of them?"

Obviously the question was directed to Hard Rock. "Ain't seen one for years!" Shorty remarked without looking up from his newspaper.

But the dude was curious. "What kind of snakes were they? Were there any sidewinders? What became of them?" the visitor persisted.

Shorty paid no attention at first, but when the stranger kept prodding him he finally laid down his newspaper in disgust.

"Sure, I'll tell ya what happened to 'em," he said.

"Death Valley usta be overrun with big rattlers. Millions of 'em. An' they wuz big fightin' reptiles. They'd come right in the house an' take grub off the dinin' table. They wuz always hungry.

"That's the way it wuz back in '15 when Pigsaw Bill decided

to start a chicken ranch over on Eight Ball crick. Bill bought one o' them incubators an' a lotta eggs an' soon had several hundred chicks in the pen he built for 'em. Then one night them snakes found a hole in the fence---an' the next mornin' Bill wuz outta the chicken business.

"But Bill is a stubborn cuss and he figgered he would outsmart them snakes. He ordered a couple a hundred more eggs, but fergot to put a fence around the incubator, an' the next mornin' the eggs wuz gone.

"That made Bill plenty mad. 'I'll fix them consarned reptiles,' he exclaimed. So his next order wuz fer a big batch o' them china nest eggs.

"He put 'em in some nests in the pen, an' then fixed the hole in the fence so it wuz barely big enough fer a snake to squeeze through. An' the next morning there wuz 43 big rattlesnakes in the pen, each with a bulge in the middle o' him. Them snakes'd swallowed the eggs and couldn't digest 'em---an' the bulge wuz too big to go through the hole.

"Bill caught so many snakes that way he lost count --- and skinned 'em and sold their hides fer making fancy belts an' pocket-books. 'Fore the summer was over he'd made more money sellin' snake skins than he coulda made outta raisin' chickens.

"An he'd be doin' it yet, only he ran outta snakes."

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BY: D.W. GRANTHAM

Today, as this page is being written, is one of those lazy July days on the Desert. The humidity is high, thunderclouds dot the sky, and I expect rain sometime this afternoon. I am guilty of doing some day-dreaming as I sit in my chair surrounded by Joshua Trees, Ocotillo, and a wide variety of cactus. My mind somehow concocted a world of peace and goodwill IF somehow we could all contrive to bring out the best in human nature. For all of us--every last one of us--has the capacity for both good and evil. There is a bit of saint in every human being--even though he maybe spending time in prison. Look at Geronimo--he is credited with saving the life of a white child while a prisoner of the Army. And there is a bit of the devil in every human being even though he maybe a preacher. We have the genetic potential.

And so I dreamed about a model town--which if we could bring it about, would be the most popular town in the

United States. It would be a small town, perhaps only a few hundred or a thousand people. Under the leadership of a few men and women who read non-fiction books, watch very little television, and spend little time every-day in meditation--perhaps a school teacher, the local pastor, a doctor, a music teacher, a lawyer, or even a real estate broker--they would get together and form a chamber of culture. Not a Chamber of Commerce, but a Chamber of culture.

They would decide that all the resources of the community should be devoted to Beauty, Cooperation, Creative Art, Learning, and Industry. Every householder would be encouraged to clean up his property, put a new coat of paint on the buildings, plant flowers and trees in the yard, spend an hour or two every day playing and working with the children, and a few hours a week in the home workshop or studio doing something creative--carpentry, lapidary, wood carving, painting, writing, practicing music--there are at least a thousand creative hobbies.

The community would have the best schools because the teachers are dedicated to the greatest profession on earth, medical costs would be moderate because of community involvement, automobile and gasoline costs would not take much of the family budget because it would be more fun to stay at home, each businessman would be friends because they are more interested in giving service to the townfolks than in trying to get rich by cutting each other's throats--and all would reflect an inner peace and security and the understanding that are the most important ingredients of happiness. Ulcers and high blood pressure would be relegated to the history books. And each resident, young or old, athletic or infirm, employed or retired, would again emerge as a person, an individual, and not just a number. It would be a place where folks really had attained the art of living together in peace, beauty and love. Quite a dream, isn't it?

